



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



**The International Treaty**  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

## **Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda**

### **EIGHTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Rome, 11– 16 November 2019**

### **Draft Framework for a Capacity Development Strategy for the International Treaty towards a Programmatic Approach**

#### **Executive Summary**

At its Seventh Session, the Governing Body highlighted capacity development in several Resolutions as a key activity to support Treaty implementation by Contracting Parties. Whilst there are some interlinkages between such activities, there is a limited overview of the various capacity building initiatives being planned or implemented. Subsequently, the Secretary put forward a proposal to the Bureau of this Eighth Session for the initiation of a Capacity Development Strategy and, based on feedback provided by the Bureau in the course of the biennium, has prepared a draft framework for the possible development of the Strategy in the next biennium.

The draft framework contained in this document, provides an initial basis for developing the Capacity Development Strategy for the period 2021-25 that takes a programmatic approach to improve coherency in planning and delivering capacity development. The Strategy will also enable the Governing Body to have a comprehensive overview of ongoing capacity development initiatives. Such overview may also assist with identifying gaps, achieving synergies and setting priorities.

#### **Guidance Sought**

The Governing Body is invited to consider the draft framework contained in the *Appendix* to this document as a basis to commence the elaboration of a draft Capacity Development Strategy for the International Treaty, in close consultation with Contracting Parties and other relevant stakeholders. The draft Strategy for the period 2021-25 will be submitted for the consideration of the Governing Body at its Ninth session.

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;  
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener  
communications. Other documents can be consulted at <http://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1111365/>*



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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Seventh Session the Governing Body highlighted capacity development, in several Resolutions, as a key activity to support Treaty implementation by Contracting Parties and stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the Secretary proposed to the Bureau of this Eighth Session the initiative for a Capacity Development Strategy. Based on initial inputs provided by the Bureau in the course of the biennium, he has prepared a draft framework as an intermediate step towards the possible development of a draft Strategy during the next biennium.
2. This document contains an overview and a brief analysis of capacity development for the implementation of the International Treaty and highlights the need for a programmatic approach to capacity development. It proposes a process for developing a draft Capacity Development Strategy in the next biennium and contains the draft framework, as contained in the *Appendix* to this document.

## II. OVERVIEW OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

3. The International Treaty entered into force in 2004. Since then, Contracting Parties have taken steps to implement its provisions at the national level, including by enhancing synergies across sectors and mainstreaming plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) into their respective national plans.
4. The full implementation of the International Treaty relies upon Contracting Parties to:
  - a. strengthen their national PGRFA programmes and integrate PGRFA considerations into National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans;
  - b. include PGRFA priorities in their national strategies to respond to climate variabilities and changes;
  - c. develop national procedures, laws or policies to enable implementation of the Multilateral System at national level and integrate them into the frameworks for access and benefit-sharing;
  - d. strengthen the operations of national germplasm collections, including by enhancing PGRFA information systems and tools to contribute to the Global Information System and the Multilateral System.
5. The extent to which such activities have been implemented by Contracting Parties varies based on national capacities and availability of resources. The experiences and lessons from Contracting Parties in implementing the Treaty provide a valuable source of information to learn from in understanding challenges to implementation and opportunities for streamlining processes at both national and international levels, as demonstrated by the implementation review by the Compliance Committee (see paragraph 7 below).
6. A number of international and regional organizations, including public and non-governmental organizations (NGO), have conducted capacity building activities for implementing the International Treaty and building synergies with other multilateral instruments. The Secretariat has also facilitated regional and national capacity building activities following requests from Contracting Parties. In doing so, it has relied on an extensive network of experts and partner institutions. The Secretariat continues

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<sup>1</sup> The need or request for capacity building is stated in the following Resolutions: Resolution 1/2017, *Contribution of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*; Resolution 4/2017, *Operations of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing*; Resolution 5/2017, *Implementation of the Global Information System*; Resolution 6/2017, *Implementation of Article 6, Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*; Resolution 7/2017, *Implementation of Article 9, Farmers' Rights*; Resolution 9/2017, *Cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity*; Resolution 12/2017, *Cooperation with other International Bodies and Organizations*.

to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to promote capacity development activities and identify practical ways of implementing the International Treaty. Within the context of FAO technical development cooperation, the Secretariat collaborates with FAO regional and country offices to support capacity building at local and regional level. Together with Bioversity International, other CGIAR Centres, the Global Crop Diversity Trust and other partners, the Secretariat collaborates on a number of training and capacity development activities on specific issues and thematic areas.

7. The work of the Compliance Committee in the current biennium has been instrumental to reviewing the state of implementation of the International Treaty, based on available national reports under the Compliance Procedures. The Committee took note of the recommendations made by Contracting Parties in relation to the capacity building and support needed for the effective implementation of the International Treaty.<sup>2</sup>

8. Since the entry into force of the International Treaty, the number of stakeholders reached through capacity building activities has increased considerably. Target groups for capacity development initiatives have included National Focal Points, farmers, scientists, researchers, as well as institutions and organizations applying for and implementing Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) projects.

9. In the current biennium, resources for capacity development have mostly come from the Benefit-sharing Fund, as specified below, and the Trust Fund for Agreed Purposes.

10. Training and capacity building is highly prioritized in all the projects sponsored by the Benefit-sharing Fund. A specific budget allocation for training is a mandatory requirement for all BSF partners. To date, more than 80 000 people among farmers, scientists and breeders, extension agents, governmental officials and students have been involved in training and capacity development through workshops, awareness raising sessions, meetings and conferences, field days and demonstration plots, laboratory works or remote training.

11. A wide range of topics have been covered by the training and capacity building initiatives sponsored by the BSF: implementation of the International Treaty, practical training on on farm conservation and management techniques, seeds certification, participatory plant breeding as well as crop diversification systems. The BSF also sponsored training in highly specialized and knowledge intensive areas such as bioinformatics and modern techniques for DNA extraction, genotyping and phenotyping.

12. In addition to training and capacity building, the BSF supports knowledge exchange and sharing including through seed fairs, open field days; and participation of partners in international conferences and policy dialogues. These events allow stakeholders to meet and share their knowledge and views, creating networks and constructive exchanges that enhance the involvement of new actors in the Treaty implementation.

13. In the current biennium, the topics covered by specific capacity development activities facilitated by the Secretariat include:

- Compliance, through three regional workshops focussed on national reporting;
- The Global Information System (GLIS), through a help desk for digital object identifiers and three sub-regional workshops on various aspects of the GLIS programme of work;
- Conservation, sustainable use and Farmers' Rights, three regional training workshops were organized in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Technical support, guidance and ad hoc assistance with the development and refinement of full project proposals provided to the applicants of the Fourth Call for Proposals of the BSF through a global workshop.

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<sup>2</sup> IT/GB-8/19/13, *Report of the Compliance Committee*, paragraph 12.

### III. THE CASE FOR A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

14. As indicated above, the Governing Body has repeatedly highlighted capacity development as a key activity to support implementation by Contracting Parties. Whilst the Secretary has developed synergies between various work tracks, for instance between the Global Information System and the Multilateral System, in order to optimise the use of resources, there is no comprehensive approach to the various capacity development initiatives being planned or implemented, nor has one been requested by the Governing Body so far.

15. Across all the inter-sessional activities conducted or facilitated by the Secretariat in the biennium, based on the guidance of the Governing Body, there have been recurrent requests for additional capacity development. Despite progress in some countries, there remains an increasing need for in-depth awareness raising and capacity development on the various mechanisms and provisions of the International Treaty. As highlighted in the report of the Compliance Committee, the national implementation of the International Treaty continues to require wide-ranging capacity development at different policy and operational levels.

16. This trend is occurring at a time when the implementation of the International Treaty may need to be more strategic, continuous and collaborative, including in order to build synergies across different sectors – such as agriculture and environment – and with other multilateral instruments, frameworks or processes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

17. Efforts for capacity development need to be renewed in order to support effective policy and operational responses by the International Treaty community to global challenges. As a consequence, capacity development should consider the external environment that influences the implementation of the International Treaty. In addition to sectoral focus, such as access and benefit-sharing, the coverage of capacity development for the International Treaty may also need to respond to global themes such as the SDGs, food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture and climate change.

18. Additionally, the national focal points of many Contracting Parties have only recently been appointed and many of the national experts who supported the Treaty implementation in developing countries have recently retired or moved to other areas of work. Hence, strengthening the institutional capacities is a persistent area of need in relation to capacity development.

19. The possible imbalance of topics and geography covered by individual, uncoordinated workshops and events of capacity development may hamper the harmonious implementation of all the components of the International Treaty. The consideration of balance in terms of geography and subject matter may be a strategic element to consider in order to foster capacity development.

20. Capacity development for the International Treaty may also be informed by FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development.<sup>3</sup> In FAO's Corporate Strategy, three dimensions of capacity development are interlinked: individuals, organizations, and the enabling environment. Capacity development often involves enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals, whose work results greatly rely on the performance of the organizations in which they work. In addition to the three-dimensional approach, successful FAO programmes have demonstrated that both technical and functional capacities are crucial for strengthening Member Countries' capacities in agriculture and rural development. A Capacity Development Strategy for the International Treaty may also reflect the above elements.

21. Implementing a programmatic approach for capacity development activities is a key consideration of the proposed Strategy. The rationale is to synchronise different capacity development

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<sup>3</sup> The FAO Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-k8908e.pdf>. The strategy is supplemented by a learning module on Enhancing FAO's Practices for Supporting Capacity Development of Member Countries, available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i1998e.pdf>.

activities as much as possible to enhance impact and use resources efficiently. The programmatic approach of a capacity development strategy would reduce duplication and optimize results by bringing the sectoral capacity development activities into a coherent vision of implementation. The use of a programmatic approach in the Capacity Development Strategy would provide Contracting Parties, capacity development providers and donors with a comprehensive resource to guide respective initiatives and actions. Additionally, a cohesive strategy will allow the Secretary to report on initiatives and results more comprehensively, and separately from the various work tracks where capacity development is relevant. Such discrete reporting would facilitate the possible determination of gaps and needs by the Governing Body – e.g. in terms of geographical coverage, topics, target groups and activities - on a rolling basis.

22. It is envisaged that the Capacity Development Strategy will continue relying on the partnerships developed so far for planning and implementing capacity development – e.g. with CGIAR Centers – and also expand such networks of partnerships to capacity development providers in other relevant sectors where implementation of the International Treaty may be mainstreamed into, such as the environmental community and in the context of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

#### **IV. POSSIBLE PROCESS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

23. Based on the experience accrued in the course of the years and the persistent demand for capacity development, the Secretary proposed the initiative for a Capacity Development Strategy in the current intersessional period. The initiative was introduced to the Bureau of this Eighth Session of the Governing Body, which noted the Secretary's proposal for a Capacity Development Strategy in order to provide coherence in existing training and capacity development activities. The Bureau recommended that the Secretary, in presenting the initiative to the Governing Body, specify the different types of capacity development activities, including specific target groups and goals. The Bureau also encouraged the Vice-Chairs to solicit comments and inputs from their respective regions to the proposal, and advised the Secretary to also provide the draft Strategy to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization for its inputs and advice. However, no specific input was received from Contracting Parties.

24. This document proposes a more gradual process to develop the strategy for the consideration by the Governing Body, consisting of an initial framework setting forth the constituent elements of the Strategy, and a possible consultative process in the next biennium.

25. The draft framework is contained in the *Appendix* and is organised around:

- an initial set of value propositions (overall goal, principles);
- implementing activities, related target groups, as recommended by the Bureau, and outcomes;
- coordination and cooperation, in order to concretise the aforementioned partnership approach;
- resources for implementation, in close synergy with the updated Funding Strategy;
- provisions for monitoring and review, to trigger the continuous updating of the Capacity Development Strategy based on emerging needs and priorities.

26. In regard to the consultative process for developing the full Strategy in the next biennium, it is suggested that such a process consist of:

- i) seeking the views of long-standing partners in capacity development, both providers and recipients, based on the initial framework for the Strategy, through an online consultation;

- ii) preparing the draft Capacity Development Strategy based on inputs received in the consultation;
- iii) submitting the draft Strategy to the proposed Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization and to the Compliance Committee, as well as to other intersessional bodies, as relevant, for advice and inputs, in the next biennium;
- iv) finalising the Strategy and submitting it for the consideration of the Governing Body at its Ninth Session.

## **V. GUIDANCE SOUGHT**

27. The Governing Body is invited to endorse the initiative by the Secretary for a Capacity Development Strategy and provide guidance on the process for developing the draft Strategy, for its possible consideration at its Ninth Session.

## ***Draft framework for the Capacity Development Strategy of the International Treaty (2021-2025)***

### **1. The overall goal**

To enhance implementation of the International Treaty through improving the coherency, efficiency and effectiveness of capacity development initiatives and activities.

### **2. Guiding principles**

- Vision- and outcome-oriented;
- Demand-driven;
- Time-bound, to allow periodic assessments and updating;
- Verifiable through indicators and milestones;
- Coordinated to integrate capacity development facilitated by the Secretariat into capacity building under the Benefit-sharing Fund and by Contracting Parties as non-monetary benefit-sharing under the Multilateral System (Article 13.2 *c*) of the Treaty;
- Cooperative, i.e. implemented through cooperation with international partners and with the support of FAO regional and national offices, as well as the national institutions and focal points, where relevant.

### **3. Activities**

The following capacity development activities that the Compliance Committee took note of, based on recommendations by Contracting Parties, may constitute the framework of activities of the Capacity Development Strategy:

- the provision of advice, technical options, and experiences for the review of mechanisms and policies for the implementation of the International Treaty;
- establishing or strengthening national coordination mechanisms and supporting national focal points and their alternates;
- the development of implementation plans for the International Treaty at the national level;
- capacity building in national institutions in various technical areas, including the use of the Standard Material Transfer Agreement (SMTA), Easy-SMTA, and the inclusion of material in the Multilateral System, as well as data management;
- taking advantage of existing and creating new opportunities for collaboration at the regional level.

### **4. Target Groups**

The Results Framework of the draft updated Funding Strategy provides a visual summary of the International Treaty, its objectives, activities and mechanisms, and identifies the partners that enable its implementation. The target groups for the capacity development strategy could include those enabling partners included in the Results Framework, such as:

- Regional and sub-regional institutions, e.g. for agriculture cooperation and research;
- National governmental institutions, e.g. national agricultural research organizations;
- Academia, e.g. universities;
- Individuals and groups, e.g. farmers, indigenous communities, breeders, researchers.

## **5. Outcomes**

- Increased visibility and raised profile of the International Treaty at national and regional levels;
- Improved and more visible information on the main components of the International Treaty, namely conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, Farmers' Rights, the Multilateral System and the Global Information System
- Improved and consistent approaches to reinforce interlinkages of PGRFA with national development plans and strategies such as food security, climate change, agricultural development, biodiversity and environmental sustainability;
- Enhanced compliance of Contracting Parties with International Treaty obligations and improved delivery of national reporting in the context of the Compliance Procedures;
- Enhanced understanding of the International Treaty resulting in effective coordination for implementation.

## **6. Coordination and Cooperation**

- Coordination and cooperation are envisaged with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to promote and identify practical ways of realizing the implementation of the International Treaty through capacity development activities.
- Such partners are envisaged to include but are not limited to: Contracting Parties, international and regional organizations, farmers' associations, indigenous and local communities, academia, civil society and NGOs, CGIAR and other international agricultural research centres, and the private sector (seed industry, food processing industry). Roles and responsibilities may be determined for the Secretariat, e.g. to collect and provide information on capacity development - and the Governing Body – e.g. to monitor progress made with the implementation, revise the Strategy accordingly and provide any further guidance.
- A possible coordination mechanism among capacity development providers may be established, once a critical mass of providers and activities is reached.

## **7. Resources for implementation**

- Resources for the Strategy will be generated according to the updated Funding Strategy of the International Treaty.
- A more cohesive and complete overview of planned and delivered capacity development activities will provide a useful basis for mobilizing resources for implementing the Strategy.

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

- The Capacity Development Strategy will be regularly monitored so that it can be continuously improved, and remain dynamic, responsive and relevant.
- Information related to the implementation, monitoring and review of the Capacity Development Strategy will be provided by the Secretary based on surveys among Contracting Parties and capacity building providers, at defined reporting cycles.
- The review of the Capacity Development Strategy by the Governing Body should take into account lessons learned, experiences and information accumulated in the course of implementation.