



COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

TEAM OF TECHNICAL AND LEGAL EXPERTS ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING

Fourth Session

Rome, 29 – 31 October 2018

“DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION” ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission, at its last session, established a new work stream on “digital sequence information.”¹ It requested the Secretariat to prepare, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, an exploratory fact-finding scoping study on “digital sequence information” on genetic resources for food and agriculture (GRFA) to provide information on, *inter alia*, terminology used in this area, actors involved with “digital sequence information” on GRFA, the types and extent of uses of “digital sequence information” on GRFA, such as:

- characterization,
- breeding and genetic improvement,
- conservation, and
- identification of GRFA

as well as on relevance of “digital sequence information” on GRFA for food security and nutrition, in order to facilitate consideration by the Commission, at its next session, of the implications of the use of “digital sequence information” on GRFA for the conservation and sustainable use of GRFA, including exchange, access and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.²

2. The *Exploratory fact-finding scoping study on “digital sequence information” on genetic resources for food and agriculture*, as revised in the light of comments and inputs received from the

¹ The term is taken from decision CBD COP XIII/16 and is subject to further discussion. There is a recognition that there are a multiplicity of terms that have been used in this area (including, *inter alia*, “genetic sequence data”, “genetic sequence information”, “genetic information”, “dematerialized genetic resources”, “in silico utilization”, etc.) and that further consideration is needed regarding the appropriate term or terms to be used.

² CGRFA-16/17/Report, paragraph 86.

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Commission's intergovernmental technical working groups, is contained in document CGRFA/TTLE-ABS-4/18/Inf.5. The exploratory fact-finding scoping study has been prepared by Jack A. Heinemann and Dorien S. Coray (School of Biological Sciences, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand) and by David S. Thaler, Biozentrum, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland. The content of the study is entirely the responsibility of the authors, and does not necessarily represent the views of FAO or its Members.

3. The Commission requested the Team of Technical and Legal Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS Expert Team) to "provide comments on the exploratory fact-finding scoping study for consideration by the Commission at its Seventeenth Regular Session".³

GUIDANCE SOUGHT

4. The ABS Expert Team is invited to comment on exploratory fact-finding scoping study.

³ CGRFA-16/17/Report Rev.1, paragraph 91.