



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



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Item 9.2 of the Provisional Agenda
INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
THIRD SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY
Tunis, Tunisia, 1 – 5 June 2009
APPROVAL OF THE FIRST PROJECTS UNDER THE BENEFIT- SHARING FUND

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Approval of the First Projects under the Benefit-sharing Fund

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its last session, the Governing Body adopted, as annexes to the Funding Strategy, Priorities, Eligibility Criteria, and Operational Procedures for the use of resources under its direct control,¹ and “*decided to delegate responsibility for project approval between sessions to the Bureau, under exceptional circumstances and for smaller scale projects*”.
2. The present document report on the execution of this mandate, by the Bureau, considers the lessons learned, and possible next steps.

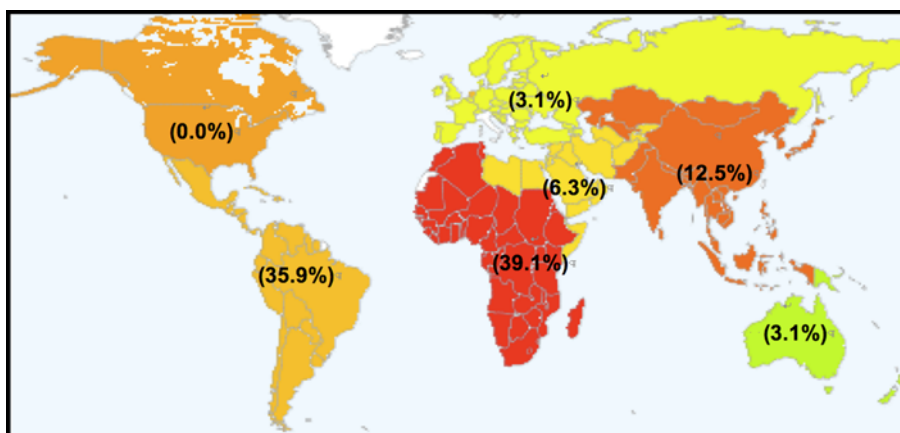
II. INITIATION OF THE FIRST PROJECT CYCLE

3. Following the Second Session of the Governing Body, funds for the first time became available to the Benefit-sharing Fund. In March 2008, Norway announced at the opening of the Svalbard Seed Vault that it undertook to make an annual voluntary contribution of 0.1% of national seed sales in Norway to the Benefit-sharing Fund. When Italy then made a contribution of US\$ 344,476, the Bureau initiated a call for proposals, in accordance with the procedures that had been approved by the Governing Body.
4. At its Second Session, the Governing Body had also established an *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy. The Bureau therefore decided to consult it, regarding (a) the appropriate amount for small-scale projects and (b) the overall amount that should be made available for the first project cycle. The *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee recommended (a) a maximum of US\$ 50,000 per project, and (b) an overall amount of US\$ 250,000, in the first project cycle.
5. The Operational Procedures adopted by the Governing Body give the Bureau the following sequential tasks:
 - To screen and respond to pre-proposals, on the basis of preparatory work by the Secretariat, so that the authors of approved pre-proposals could be requested to prepare project proposals;
 - To appraise the project proposals received, on the basis of recommendations by a Panel of Experts designated by the Members of the Bureau in consultation with their Regions; and
 - To approve projects for funding within the project cycle, if the Governing Body had delegated this authority to it, as was the case in the 2008/09 biennium.
6. The Bureau accordingly requested the Secretariat to prepare the call for proposals, and draw up standard application forms, as well as standard evaluation forms, on the basis of the criteria that had been approved by the Governing Body. In doing so, the Secretariat, as requested by the Governing Body, also consulted the Secretariat of the Global Crop Diversity Trust, in order to learn from its experience in project operations. Bureau Members initiated consultation with their regions, in order to identify one expert per region to serve on the Panel of Experts.
7. The formal call for proposals was opened in the first week of December 2008, by posting it on the website of the Treaty, and by notification to the National Focal Points for the Treaty and Permanent Representative of the Contracting Parties to FAO. A deadline of 15 January 2009 for submission of pre-proposals was set.

¹ Appendices D1, D2 and D3, respectively of the *Report of the Second Session of the Governing Body*.

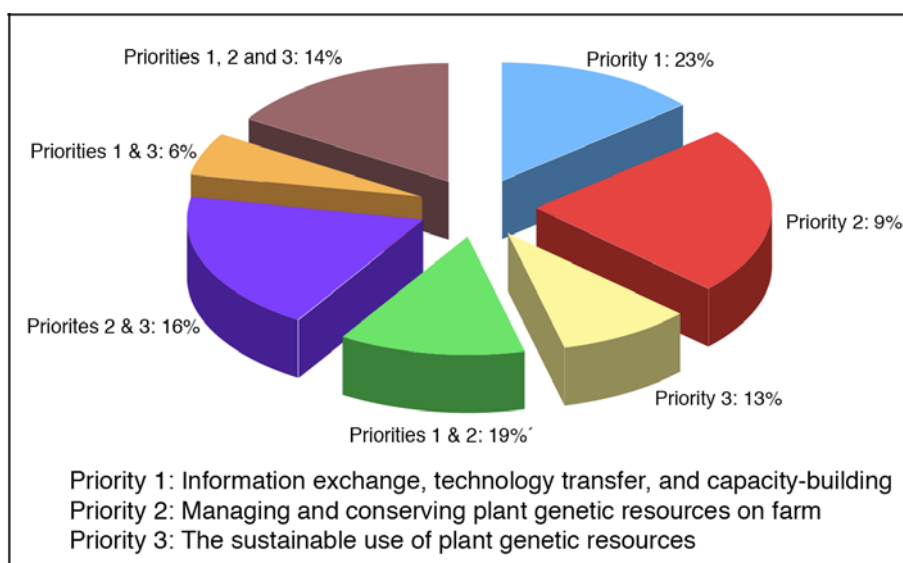
III. RECEIPT, SCREENING AND APPROVAL OF PROJECTS

Figure 1: Regional distribution of approved pre-proposals



8. Some hundreds of pre-proposals were received with the specified time limit, from all FAO regions. The Bureau screened these according to the Eligibility Criteria established by the Governing Body, approved 64 pre-proposals, and requested the Secretary to call for project proposals in these cases, with a cut-off date of 18 March 2009. *Figure 1* shows the regional distribution of pre-proposals approved.

Figure 2: Priorities addressed in the approved pre-proposals



9. *Figure 2* shows the priorities, as given in the Operational Procedures adopted by the Governing Body, that were addressed in the 64 approved pre-proposals; some addressed one priority only, and others a combination of priorities.

10. A total of 45 eligible project proposals were received within this time-frame. *Figure 3* shows the regional distribution of these project proposals. *Figure 4* shows the priorities, as given in the Operational Procedures adopted by the Governing Body, that were addressed in the 45 project proposals received; as before, some addressed one priority only, and others a combination of priorities.

Figure 3: Regional distribution of project proposals received

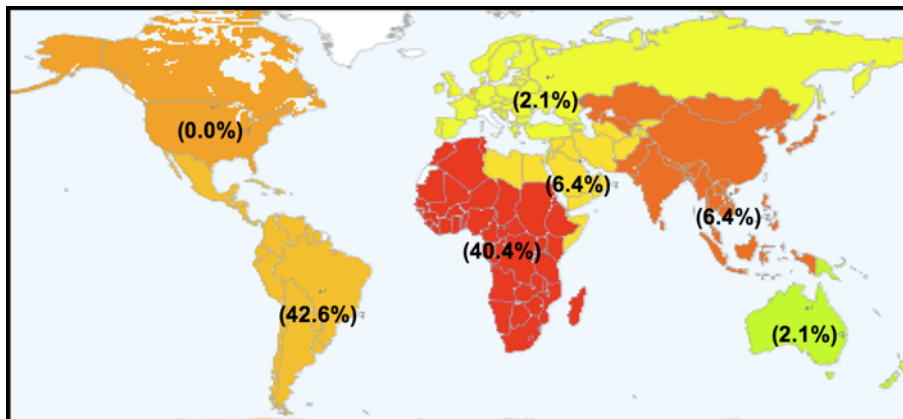
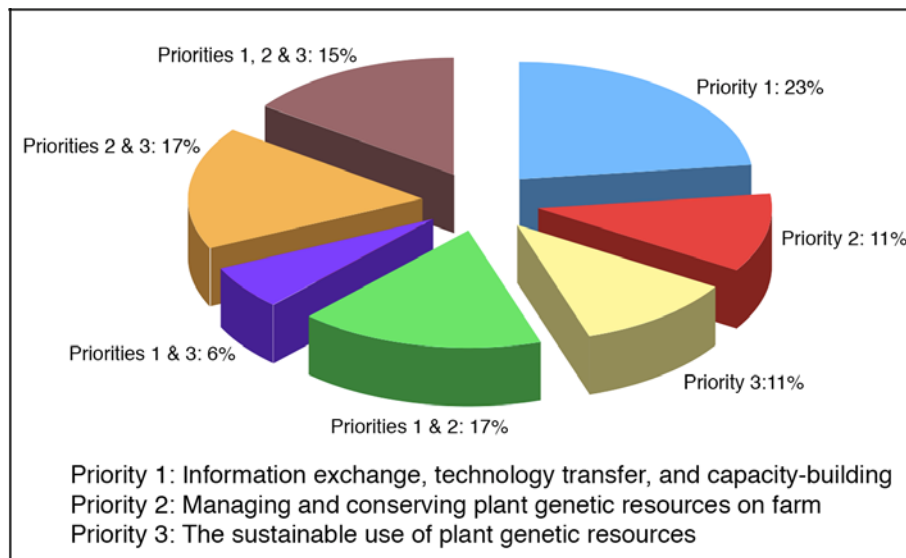


Figure 4: Priorities addressed in the project proposals received



11. In accordance with the Operational Procedures, as adopted, the Bureau then transmitted these project proposals to the Panel of Experts² that had been established, along with the standard evaluation form, so that they might be appraised and ranked. Three experts were asked to comment on each project, one of whom was from the region in question. They ranked each on a scale of 0-5, in terms of the ten selection criteria in the Operational Procedures.

12. The Bureau agreed that the individual scores of the three experts would be summed and that, to be eligible for approval, projects needed to score a total of 75 points (that is, at least 50% of the possible maximum score). It was also agreed that projects needed to score an average of 3 out of 5 possible points (that is 60% of the maximum possible score) for the specific criteria of both relevance and feasibility. In order to ensure regional balance, it was agreed that the Bureau would then select the highest-ranking eligible project in each region for approval, if the overall cost of all these projects fell within the amount available.

13. The Bureau met on 31 May 2009 in Tunis, to consider final approvals. On reviewing the funds available in the Benefit-sharing Fund, as of 15 May 2009, considerable more funds had been received, with contributions by Norway (US\$ 78,000), Spain (US\$ 130,000) and

² The experts nominated to the Panel by the regions are listed in *Appendix 1*.

Switzerland (US\$ 28,612). The Fund therefore stood at US\$ 581,088. The Bureau therefore decided that it would be reasonable to increase the ceiling for disbursements in this cycle to US\$ 580,000.

14. On reviewing the scores, the Bureau noted that projects from four regions fulfilled the minimum criteria to be eligible for approval (the projects submitted by South West Pacific and Europe did not fulfil the minimum criteria, and North America did not submit any project). It therefore approved the top-ranking project that met the minimum criteria, from each of these regions. The Bureau, decided that, for the balance of the funds available, it would consider all remaining projects that met the minimum criteria together, and approve those with the highest score, with a maximum of one project per country.

The following 11 projects were approved for funding, in accordance with this decision:

<p><i>Requester:</i> Africa, Kenya, Maseno University <i>Title:</i> Characterization, genetic enhancement and revitalization of finger millet in western Kenya <i>Priorities:</i> 3; <i>Crops:</i> finger millet</p>	US\$ 49,930
<p><i>Requester:</i> Africa, Morocco, National Agricultural Research Institute <i>Title:</i> On-farm conservation and mining of local durum and bread wheat landraces of Morocco for biotic stresses and incorporating UG99 resistance <i>Priorities:</i> 2, 3; <i>Crops:</i> Wheat</p>	US\$ 50,000
<p><i>Requester:</i> Africa, Sénégal, Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA) <i>Title:</i> Préservation de l'agro-biodiversité des cultivars locaux: Mil, Maïs, Sorgho par l'amélioration participative pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture au Sénégal <i>Priorities:</i> 1, 2, 3; <i>Crops:</i> Millet, Maize, Sorghum</p>	US\$ 50,000
<p><i>Requester:</i> Africa, Tanzania, National Plant Genetic Resources Centre <i>Title:</i> Strengthening on-farm conservation and use of sorghum, finger millet, lablab beans and yam crop diversities for improved food security and adaptation to climate change in Tanzania <i>Priorities:</i> 2; <i>Crops:</i> Sorghum, finger millet, lablab beans and yam crops</p>	US\$ 49,904
<p><i>Requester:</i> Asia, India, Peermade Development Society (<i>non-governmental organization</i>) <i>Title:</i> Conservation, dissemination and popularization of location specific farmer-developed varieties by establishing village level enterprises <i>Priorities:</i> 1, 2; <i>Crops:</i> All</p>	US\$ 49,000
<p><i>Requester:</i> Latin America and the Caribbean, Costa Rica, Universidad de Costa Rica, Centro de Investigaciones Agronomicas (CIA) <i>Title:</i> Identification of useful potato germplasm adapted to biotic and abiotic stresses caused by global climate change <i>Priorities:</i> 3; <i>Potato</i></p>	US\$ 50,000
<p><i>Requester:</i> Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba, Fundamental Research Institute on Tropical Agriculture <i>Title:</i> Contribution of traditional methods for the in situ conservation and management of maize (<i>Zea mays</i> L.) and bean (<i>Phaseolus</i> spp.) to the food security of farming in Cuba <i>Priorities:</i> 1, 2, 3; <i>Maize, bean</i></p>	US\$ 50,000
<p><i>Requester:</i> Latin America and the Caribbean, Nicaragua, Universidad Nacional Agraria <i>Title:</i> Rescue, conservation and sustainable management of teocintle in Nicaragua (<i>Zea nicaraguensis</i> Iltis & Benz) in the <i>Reserva de Recursos Genéticos de Apacunca</i> (Apacunca Genetic Reserve) <i>Priorities:</i> 2, 3; <i>Crops:</i> Maize</p>	US\$ 49,170
<p><i>Requester:</i> Latin America and the Caribbean, Peru, Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES) (<i>non-governmental organization</i>)</p>	

<i>Title:</i> Conservation and sustainable use of native potato diversity in the Potato Park, Cusco <i>Priorities:</i> 1, 2, 3; <i>Crops:</i> Potato	US\$ 50,000
<i>Requester:</i> Latin America and the Caribbean, Uruguay, Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias <i>Title:</i> Broadening of potato (<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>) genetic basis through introgression of local wild species, <i>Solanum commersonii</i> <i>Priorities:</i> 3; <i>Crops:</i> Potato	US\$ 45,000
<i>Requester:</i> Near East, Egypt, National Gene Bank and Genetic Resources <i>Title:</i> On farm conservation and in vitro preservation of citrus local varieties and sustainable utilization in Egypt <i>Priorities:</i> 1, 2, 3; <i>Crops:</i> Local citrus varieties	US\$ 50,000
TOTAL: US\$ 543,004	

IV. THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND, AND NEXT STEPS

15. The Operational Procedures adopted by the Governing Body provide that “*projects not fundable within that year will be presented to donors for possible funding, or may be re-submitted in the following budgetary period*”.

16. Documents IT/GB-3/09/7, *Report of the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy*, and IT/GB-3/09/8 Rev.1, *Report on actions taken by the Secretary on the implementation of the Funding Strategy*, deal with the arrangements that the Governing Body may wish to make for the next project cycle.

17. The attention of the Governing Body is drawn, in particular, to Part III of document IT/GB-3/09/8 Rev.1, *Lessons learned in the operation of the Benefit-sharing Fund*.

18. The Bureau wishes also to note the very positive response to the call for proposals, and the generally high quality of those submitted. The initiation of project approval from the funds under the direct control of the Governing Body is a major step in the implementation of the Treaty.

19. The Bureau extended its thanks to the members of the Panel of Experts, who worked on a voluntary basis, and provided excellent advice.

APPENDIX 1: MEMBERS OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

AFRICA

Dr. Amor Chermiti, Tunisia

ASIA

Mr. Engsiang Lim, Malaysia

EUROPE

Associate Professor Carl-Gustaf Thornström, Sweden

Alternate: Dr Geert Kleijer, Switzerland

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mr César Tapia, Ecuador

NEAR EAST

Mr Javad Mozafari, Iran

Alternate: Mr Yousef WJHANI, Syria

NORTH AMERICA

Mr Bryan Harvey, Canada

Alternate: Mr Ken Richards, Canada

SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

Ms Mary Taylor, Fiji Islands