



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



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture**

**INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

**TWELFTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING
GROUP TO ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE
MULTILATERAL SYSTEM**

Rome, Italy, 16–19 September 2024

Future Work Suggested by the Co-Chairs

Executive Summary

The mandate and terms of reference of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System (Working Group) are provided in Resolutions 3/2022 and 3/2023. The Working Group was re-established to finalize the enhancement of the functioning of the Multilateral System by the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body.

In Resolution 3/2023, the Governing Body noted that, with a view to make sufficient progress, four formal in-person meetings of the Working Group will be required; and invited the Co-Chairs to organize informal consultations, as appropriate, and, where needed, small ad hoc Friends of the Co-Chairs groups while ensuring that the process is undertaken in a transparent and representative manner.

In this document, the Co-Chairs present their plans for the next steps in the process, for discussion with the Working Group at its twelfth meeting.

The thirteenth meeting of the Working Group will be held in March/April 2025. The fourteenth meeting of the Working Group is tentatively scheduled for June/July 2025.

Guidance Sought

The Working Group is invited to provide input to the Co-Chairs on its future work. It may also want to provide guidance on preparatory processes for the thirteenth meeting and on any further documents it may wish to be prepared for its thirteenth meeting.

FUTURE WORK SUGGESTED BY THE CO-CHAIRS

1. As Co-Chairs we believe that the Working Group has made important progress in a constructive spirit and mutual understanding. We will continue to do our best to guide the Working Group, so that we can propose a package of measures to the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body as expected. We will keep our efforts to ensure a process that continues to be inclusive, transparent, balanced, and open.
2. We also realize that we have less than a year left to finalize our recommendations for the consideration of the Governing Body end of 2025. We therefore suggest using a variety of tools and formats to advance our work. We keep the indicative timeline updated on the website of the International Treaty at <https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/the-multilateral-system/enhancement-process/en/>.
3. For the period between this twelfth meeting and the thirteenth meeting, scheduled for March/April 2025, we believe the following may be useful.
4. **Written submissions.** There may be a need to invite additional written inputs on the draft negotiating text after our twelfth meeting. As Co-Chairs we will assess during the meeting if submissions could be useful and on what issues.
5. **An informal physical meeting.** We had already raised the possibility of convening an informal meeting to advance the negotiations, possibly in the last quarter of this year. Given the constructive atmosphere and productive outcomes at the May 2023 meeting in Prangins, Switzerland, we thought a similar meeting could be held in December 2024. An informal meeting may be helpful in addressing key outstanding issues, especially regarding the three hotspots. The timing would allow us to digest the possible outcomes of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, scheduled for 21 October to 1 November 2024, especially on digital sequence information.
6. **A small drafting group advising the Co-Chairs.** We look forward to our discussions on text at this meeting. In order to make the maximum use of our limited time at the two subsequent formal meetings remaining, we believe it might be more productive to get advice from a small drafting group. In the first phase of the enhancement process, drafting and redrafting text consumed a substantial amount of time at the formal meetings of the Working Group. If the Working Group is able to single out specific provisions where we have agreement on concepts and approaches, the Co-Chairs could instruct a small drafting group to come up with the appropriate language. The Working Group could then consider the language at its subsequent meeting.
7. **Reconvening the Standing Group of Legal Experts.** Some legal questions were raised in the submissions received ahead of this meeting and more legal issues may come up. Our suggestion for addressing these questions would be to reconvene the Standing Group of Legal Experts (SGLE), to provide advice to us Co-Chairs. The period between the twelfth and the thirteenth meetings seems to be a good time for a meeting of the SGLE.
8. **Small Friends of the Co-Chairs groups.** Depending on the discussions of the Working Group at this meeting, a few items may still remain, where expert input may be needed. One example could be final technical questions or doubts on the payment structure together with some of the definitions. As in the previous phase of the enhancement process, these Friends of the Co-Chairs groups could report to us Co-Chairs and we would use their advice to make proposals for the package of measures.
9. **Virtual meetings of the Co-Chairs with Regions and stakeholder groups.** We will repeat the exercise of meeting all Regions and stakeholder groups ahead of the next meeting of the Working Group. Additionally, we are always open for further meetings during the intersessional period, if Regions or stakeholder groups so wish.
10. We invite the Working Group to consider our plans for the coming months and discuss the possibility of using some or all of the above tools, to make the maximum out of the remaining part of the biennium. The time between the thirteenth meeting (March/April 2025) and the fourteenth meeting (June/July 2025) will be short, so that we suggest using the upcoming intersessional period most efficiently.