



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



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

## **Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda**

### **SEVENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

**Kigali, Rwanda, 30 October – 3 November 2017**

**Report on the Benefit-sharing Fund: 2016-2017**

### **Executive Summary**

This information document provides a progress report on the execution of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF) project cycles since the last Session of the Governing Body. This document focuses on progress made in the implementation of the third project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF3) and presents some key facts and figures on results achieved so far in the execution of the third cycle portfolio.

During the biennium, all projects funded under the second project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund (BSF2) have been concluded. An Independent Evaluation of the second cycle portfolio has been conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation and has been finalized. Lastly, the document presents the main steps in the preparation of the Fourth Call for Proposals.

*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-  
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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. This information document reports on the execution of the Benefit-sharing Fund project cycles since the last Session of the Governing Body (October 2015). It therefore covers the last months of biennium 2014-2015 as well as most of the present biennium 2016-2017. During this period, all 28 projects approved for funding in the second project cycle have concluded. An Independent Evaluation of the first batch of 19 projects approved for funding in 2012 has been conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation and has been finalized. The Report of the Independent Evaluation is available at this session as IT/GB-7/17/Inf. 18 *Report of the Independent Evaluation of the Second project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund*.

2. Throughout 2015-2016 the Secretariat, together with relevant FAO units, has engaged in the finalization of the project agreements with the executing institutions of the BSF3 and in the monitoring and reporting on the execution of the projects that became operational throughout 2016-2017.

3. During this intersessional period, the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau, prepared the Fourth Call for Proposals of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The Bureau received inputs from the Co-Chairs of the *Ad-hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy particularly with regard to using the fourth funding cycle as a bridge into the proposed programmatic approach for the Funding Strategy. An announcement of the Call will take place at the Seventh Session of the Governing Body and, for the official launch, on-line distribution of Notifications and publication of documents in all required languages will take place in late November.

## II. FOURTH ROUND OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

4. The Secretariat has received so far contributions for the fourth round of the project cycle for a total of USD 4 595 313 from donors such as Austria, Australia, Canada, ESA, Indonesia, Italy, ISF, Norway and Sweden.

5. During its first meeting in June 2016, the Bureau considered a concept note on the Fourth Call for Proposals and emphasized that the Call would need to maintain a focus on climate change adaptation and continue supporting small-scale farmers in developing countries. The Bureau also requested the Secretary to transmit the draft Fourth Call to the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy (ACFS) for the development of the final draft.

6. At its second meeting in March 2017, the Bureau considered a first version of the draft Call and agreed to “launch the Fourth Call for Proposals before the next session of the Governing Body, although the established funding target had not been reached. It requested the Secretariat to revise and simplify the text of the draft Call for Proposals, based on the comments provided, and circulate it for further consideration and finalization, following which the Fourth Call for Proposals will proceed in accordance with the normal procedures established by the Governing Body.”

7. During the Bureau teleconference held in June 2017, the Co-Chairs of the *Ad-Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy provided an update on the outcomes of the work of the Committee during the biennium. During the Ninth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Funding Strategy, the Committee requested its Co-Chairs to liaise with the Bureau of the Governing Body to inform about the progress made in the update of the Funding Strategy and explore the possibility of using the fourth funding cycle to bridge into the proposed programmatic approach of the updated Funding Strategy.

8. The Fourth Call for Proposals has been prepared, under the guidance of the Bureau and taking into account the inputs and comments received from the Co-Chairs of the ACFS. It builds upon the

overall proposed goal of the Funding Strategy and calls partners to implement interventions in synergetic manner as to maximize impact beyond individual projects.

9. The ultimate beneficiaries of the Fourth Call will be vulnerable and marginalized farming communities in developing countries, with a special focus on women. Special attention will be given in the execution of the Call to filling gaps along the seed-value chain and enhancing the policy environment and funding opportunities for implementation of Treaty mechanisms.

10. Thematic coherence between individual projects has been improved in the Fourth Call through the development of a programmatic approach that revolves around 5 higher-level Program Outcomes. Two main outcomes (Outcome 1 and Outcome 2) are related to windows for funding of previous Call for Proposals (Window 2 and Window 3) and relate to on-farm management, capacity building, local food and seed systems. An *Outcome Matrix* has been developed to simplify the programme concept and align it with the proposed new *Results Framework* of the Funding Strategy.

11. The Fourth Call intends to move from a purely competitive selection process to a more integrated selection process. Only partners demonstrating the greatest potential to contribute to the program outcomes in the pre-proposal phase will be invited to participate in the subsequent full proposal design phase. This greatly reduces the transaction costs and timeframe for all parties involved.

12. The Panel of Experts will be in charge of screening of the received proposals and will be nominated by the Bureau of the Eighth Session of the Governing Body.

### III. EXECUTION OF THE THIRD ROUND OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

#### Finalization of contractual agreements to be signed with BSF 3 executing institutions

13. The BSF3 consists of 22 projects to be implemented in 44 developing countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Near East, South West Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean that are exposed to intertwined challenges of climate change and food insecurity.

14. During this intersessional period, the Secretariat, in consultation with relevant FAO departments, has engaged in the preparation of the Letters of Agreement (LoAs) to be signed with executing institutions of BSF 3 approved projects. The following steps have been carried out by the Secretariat for the operationalization of BSF 3 portfolio:

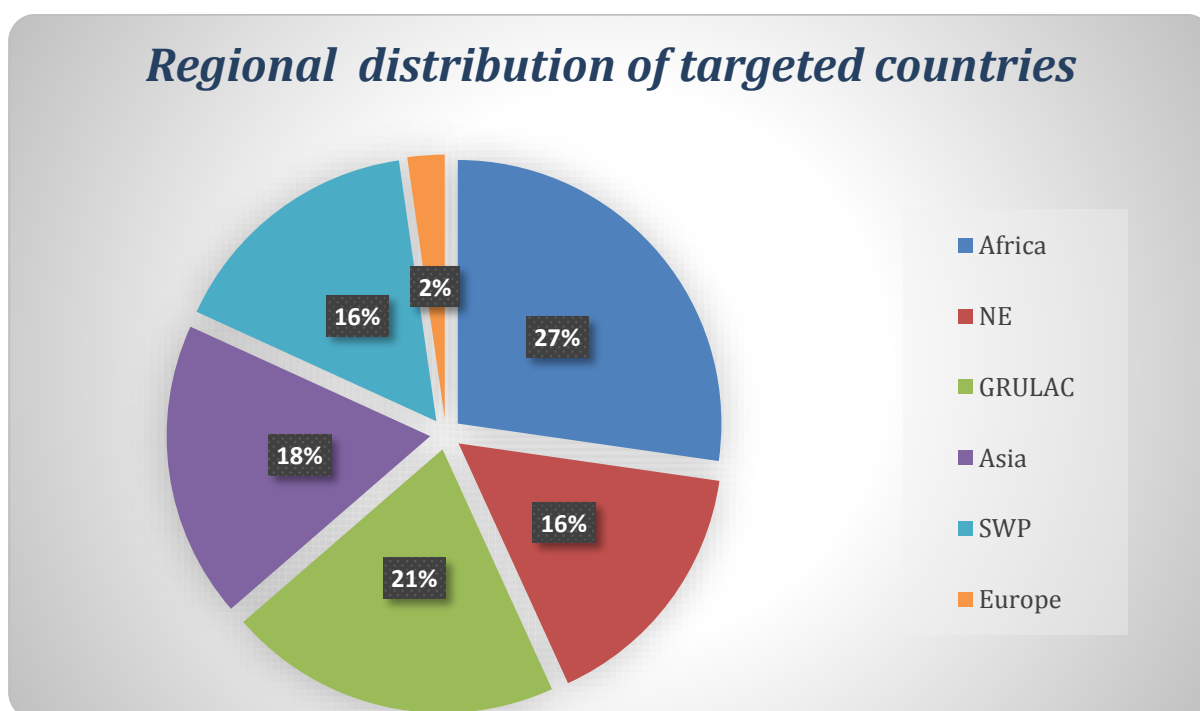
- Update of the project proposals, especially budgets, procurement, financial information and work plans to align the project proposals and related documentation to the FAO revised rules on Letters of Agreement. In this regard, specific guidelines have been prepared by the Secretariat and provided to the executing institutions;
- Preparation and circulation of the draft LoAs within the Service Providers' institutions for information and acknowledgement;
- Consultation and negotiation between FAO Legal Office, FAO Communication Office and the Service Providers on a series of LoA clauses, especially related to IPR clause, taxes, financial reporting, payment schedule and other provisions of the Letters of Agreement;
- Consultation and negotiation with FAO Procurement Unit for the formalization of direct procurement of services and goods;
- Review by FAO of each Window 3 project on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the procurement of specific items should be included or excluded from the Letters of Agreement;
- Direct procurement by FAO of services and goods for the majority of Window 3 projects;
- Signature of projects Agreements ( 90% completed) and first tranches of funds disbursed accordingly;

- Remote training on EU verification system and EU standards for the financial management of funds organized and delivered by FAO Financial Unit to the executing institutions of the BSF3 as to enhance their skills and capacities to effectively manage EU funds;
- Monitoring and Reporting of the BSF 3 portfolio according to the schedules for reporting and monitoring established in each LoA.

15. At the time of the preparation of this report, the Secretariat has received and approved all the *Interim Technical and Financial Reports* that were due within this timeframe and disbursed funds accordingly.

### Overview of third cycle project portfolio

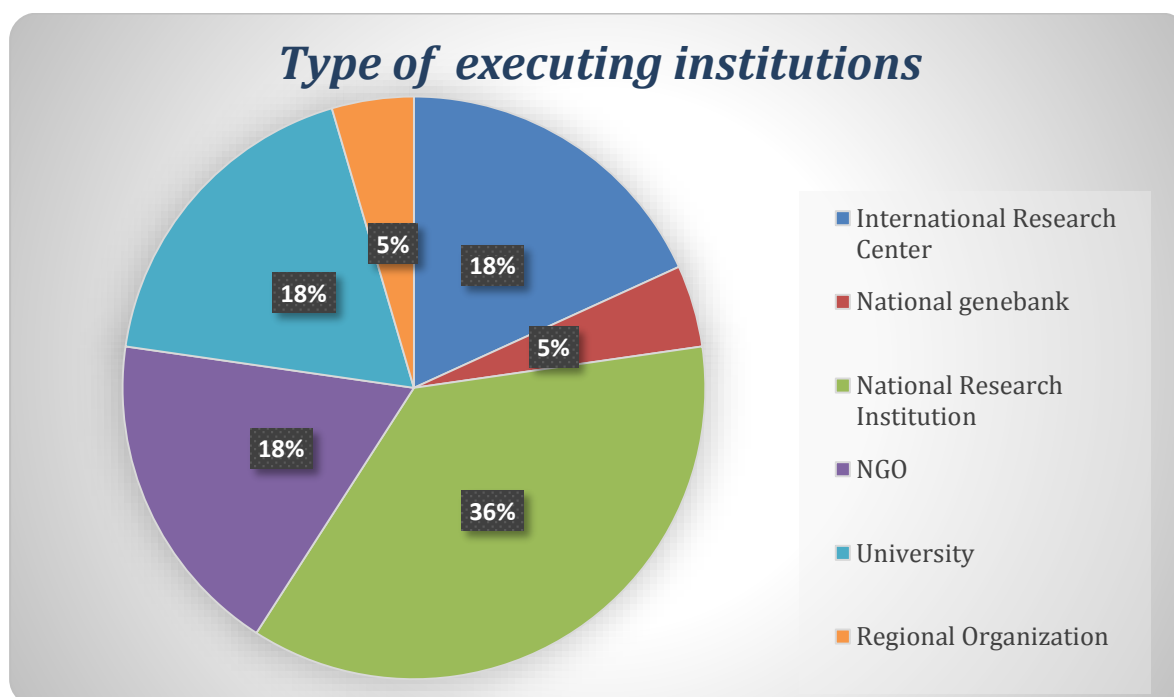
16. The 22 projects approved for funding in the BSF3 involve a total of 44 developing countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Near East, South West Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. The main purpose of the sponsored portfolio is to build resilience in the face of climate change and food insecurity through the sustainable use, conservation, and the development and study of genetic diversity for the benefit of the most vulnerable communities.



*Figure 1: Regional distribution of targeted countries*

17. While Window 2 projects support activities that ensure that local crop varieties of importance for food security are preserved, reintroduced, developed and maintained in farmers' fields primarily at the farm and community levels, Window 3 projects aim to enable the exchange of value added information about PGRFA through scientific research and study and identify specific traits that tolerate climate induced stresses. Both Window 2 and Window 3 projects sponsor activities that are mutually reinforcing and complementary and that ultimately contribute to increased resilience, adaptability, environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods.

18. There is a wide range of institutions involved in the execution of the BSF3 including national and international research institutions, universities, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.



*Figure 2: Type of executing institutions of BSF 3*

19. The primary beneficiaries of the BSF 3 are vulnerable communities in the target countries that strive to build resilience and food security through the management of PGRFA. From a total of 18,746<sup>1</sup> people that have been directly involved in project activities up to date, 15 127 are farmers.

20. Farmers have already benefited from practical training on on-farm conservation and management techniques, access to seeds and related information, participatory plant breeding programs as well as crop diversification.

***Increasing access to quality and diverse seeds through the establishment of community seed banks in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania***

The Kiziba community seedbank was established in 2008 in Uganda and currently stores 70 varieties of beans serving over 1 000 farmers.

These seed banks have obtained the Quality Declared Seeds (QDS) certification and started selling QDS-certified seeds in local areas. Because of its exemplary performance, the community seedbank is now being used as a learning platform for the creation of four community seedbanks in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania as part of the BSF 3 funded project Promoting open source seed systems of forages, legumes, millet and sorghum for climate change adaptation.

Farmers' seed fairs and knowledge exchange forums have been organized as learning platforms for 65 farmers (30 women) representing the farmer associations of the Hoima district (Uganda). During such visits, Kiziba farmers have shared their knowledge with their guests and lessons learnt and best practices on their local seed varieties, good agricultural practices for seed production, post-harvest handling and storage, community seedbank management and in situ conservation through community seed banking.

<sup>1</sup> The sources of the statistical data presented throughout this document are the progress reports and monitoring questionnaires submitted by executing institutions of BSF 3 throughout the implementation period.

The farmers from Hoima applauded the community seedbank and pledged to replicate this model in their districts. Eve Kugonza, one of the leaders of the farmer groups that took part in the tour, said that they found the concept of having many different seed varieties in one place very noble as it safeguards and protects indigenous varieties. “We like the idea of having a variety of seeds, some of which are not even on the market. The diversity helps manage risk related food and nutrition insecurity and provides for a wide range of diversity at the community level. The spirit of sharing the seeds freely among the group is also a good one and it promotes unity at community level,” Kugonza said.

This project is expected to benefit at least 10 000 resource poor farmers through the establishment of 4 community conservation systems as a means of increasing access to crop diversity and responding to farmers' needs.



21. Considering the interdisciplinary nature of PGRFA and the need to adopt integrated approaches in its management and study, BSF3 has so far reached a wide range of stakeholders:

- Almost 3 000 researchers and breeders have benefited from involvement in participatory breeding programmes, access to pre-bred materials, integrated packages information and technologies about climate ready germplasm, including genomic sequence data, phenotypic, accession-level and other data needed for plant breeding. Genebanks and research institutions are benefitting from the adoption of better technologies and knowledge associated to adapted genetic material.
- More than 100 extension officers and local practitioners from community-based organizations have benefitted from training on seed multiplication, climate information products and quality control systems.
- More than 371 students, both MSc and PhD, are gaining knowledge on participatory methods of plant breeding and community-based management systems of PGRFA and are benefiting from the practical application of genomics, phenotyping and use of molecular techniques. They will constitute a future generation of PGRFA scientists and breeders to support Treaty implementation.
- Around 259 government officials and genebank staff have been involved in project activities, mainly in training and capacity building, as to create baselines for future decisions and policies. As part of this portfolio, genebanks are actively engaged in providing material for analysis and evaluation, including molecular characterization that will contribute to enrich their collections with new, improved genetic material and increased access to information.

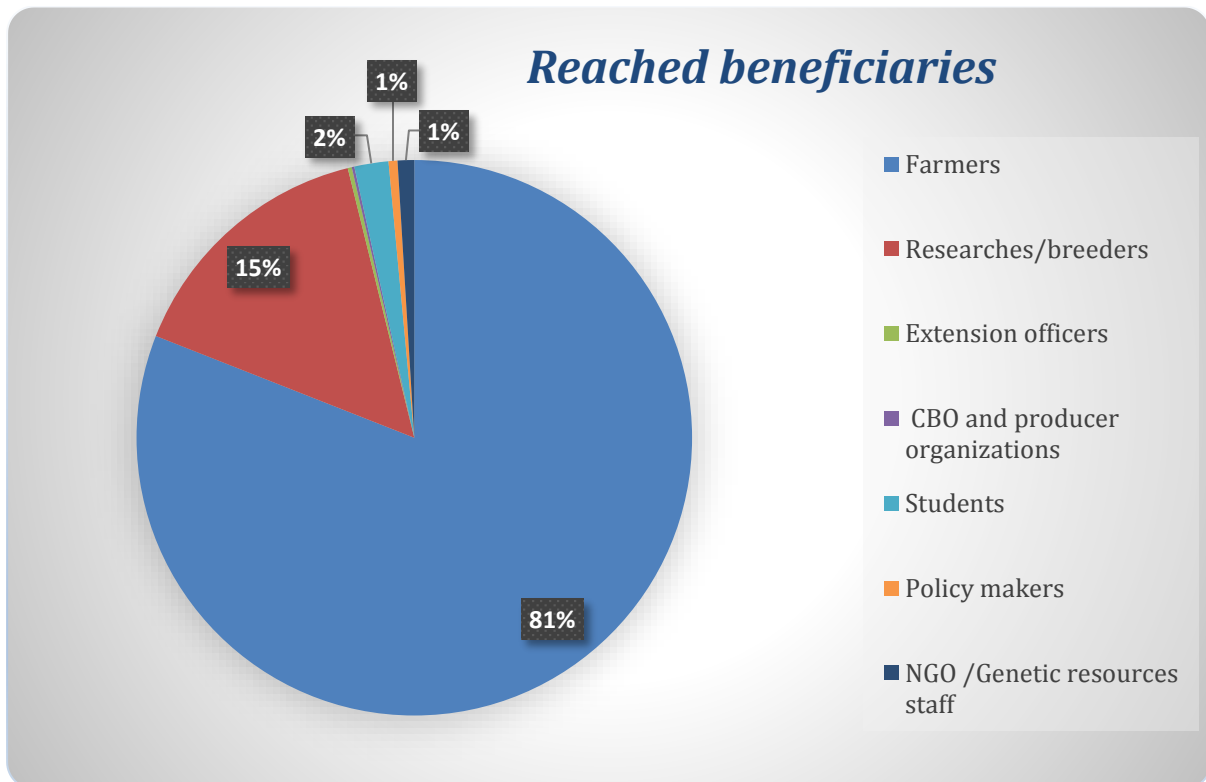


Figure 3: Reached beneficiaries (up to 30/06/2017)

22. The executing institutions of the BSF3 have reported that by the end of portfolio implementation it is expected that a total of at least 51 958 people will be directly involved in the implementation of project activities and an estimated 243 796 people will indirectly benefit from the scaling up and out of the outcomes of portfolio implementation.

23. The BSF 3 portfolio addresses a total of 29 crops, mainly *Annex 1* crops (72 %). While 10 projects are focusing on a single crop the other 12 projects deal with mixtures /package of crops addressing up to 10 crops in one project.

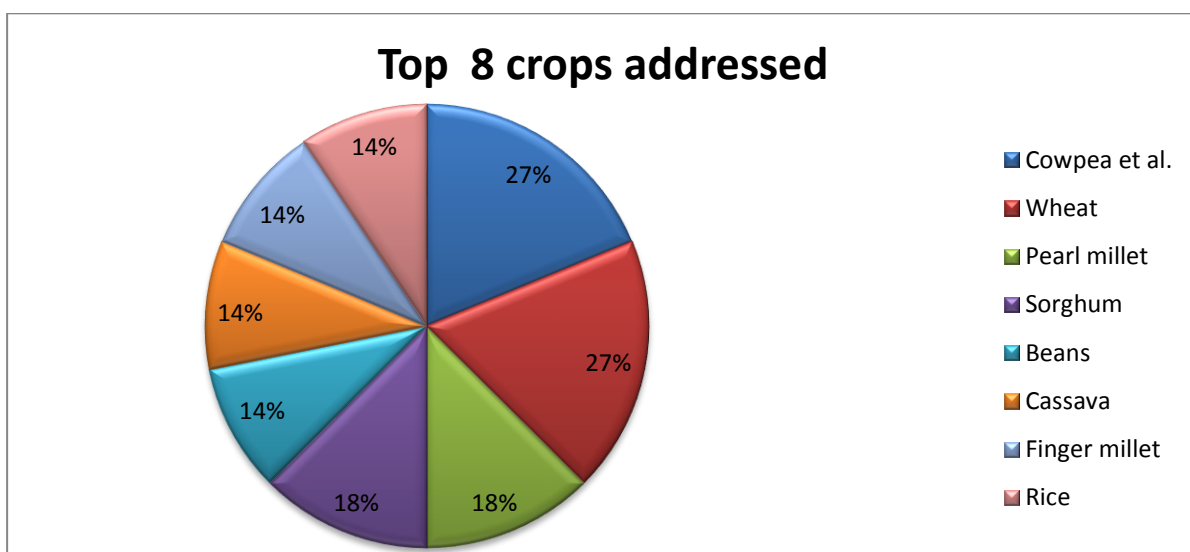


Figure 4: Top 8 crops addressed in BSF 3

24. Diversification of production systems and the availability of a genetically diverse portfolio being managed by different stakeholders is expected to improve productivity, build resilience of farming systems, improve livelihoods and promote environmental sustainability.

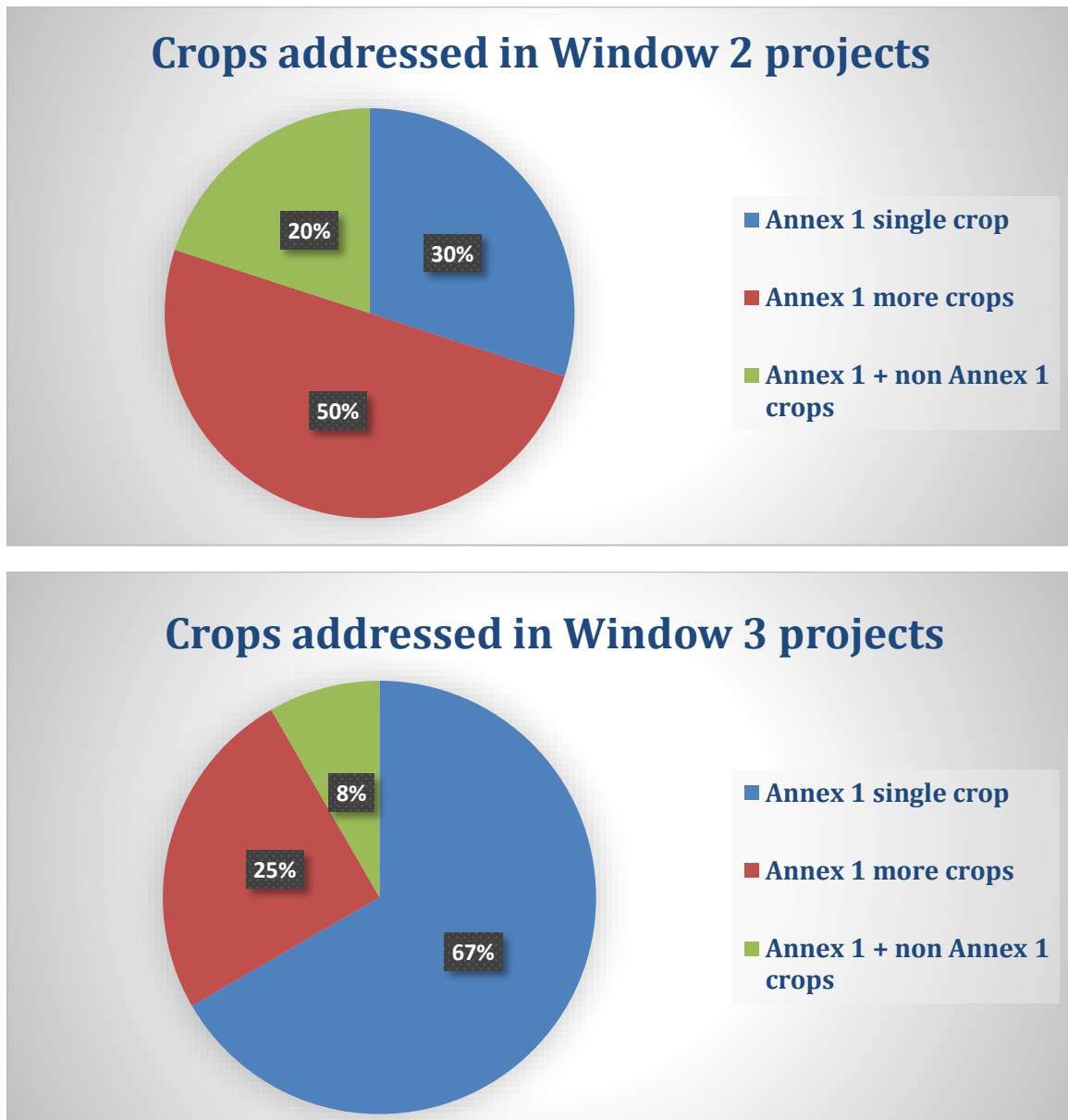


Figure 5: Crops addressed in BSF3 by type of funding window

25. The majority of material that is currently managed by BSF 3 partners has been accessed through the Standard Material Transfer Agreement of the ITPGRFA. In addition, as required by the Governing Body and as stipulated in the contracts signed with the executing institutions, all the germplasm of crops listed in *Annex I* of the ITPGRFA that is within the scope of the projects will be made available according to the terms and conditions of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing. Furthermore, all the information resulting from projects, including phenotypic and genetics information related to the tested material will be made available to the global community through the Global Information System of the ITPGRFA.



### Third cycle portfolio: some facts and figures

26. One of the underlying characteristics of the approach adopted by the executing institutions of the BSF 3 is the ability to bring together a wide range of partnering institutions<sup>2</sup>, each with its own field of expertise and know-how. Around 100 institutions have joined forces so far in the implementation of the project portfolio and represent innovative partnerships between universities, institutes for biodiversity conservation, international organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, genebanks and national and international research institutes.

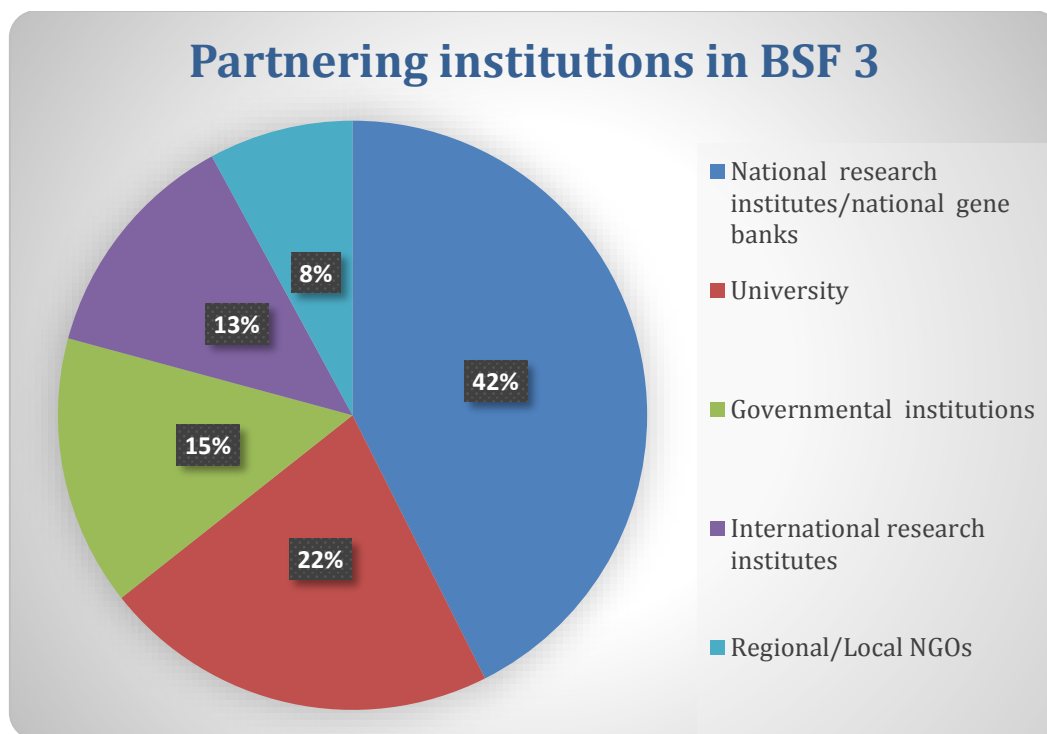


Figure 6: Partnering institutions in BSF 3

27. Similarly, partners in Zimbabwe are working with 3360 smallholder farming households including women-headed farming households that have limited access to seeds for developing and distributing new varieties of cowpeas, sorghum, and pearl millet. In all the districts implementation is involving the Department of Agricultural Extension Services, the Meteorological services department, Farmers unions and rural councils. Seed companies are getting involved in the project to work with local communities on seed delivery systems and enterprises.

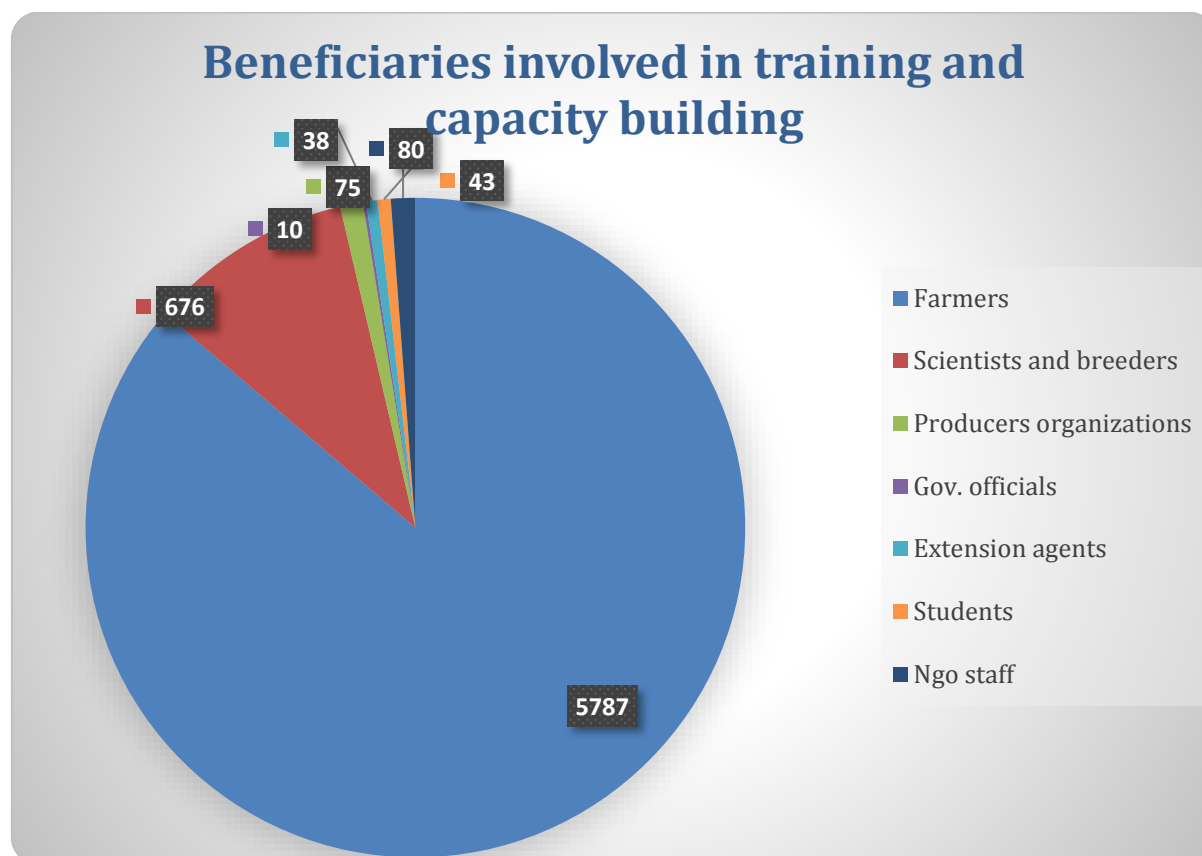
28. Window 3 projects focus on promoting international cooperation between institutions in developing countries and institutions or consortia of institutions that work together in the co-development and utilization of technologies that enable the generation, exchange and utilization of PGRFA information.

29. For example, the project in Turkey, which is working to implement and transfer wheat breeding technologies to impact wheat yields in low rainfall locations of Turkey, Iran and Morocco has successfully put together a consortium of Universities, National and International Research Institutes, seed industry and farmers in the process of selection of best varieties and landraces to be used in crosses by breeders, on farm variety testing and the development of faster and cheaper methodologies for screening. This consortia of institutions is working together to provide training on

<sup>2</sup> Partnering institutions are those institutions that have formal agreements with the executing institutions for the implementation of project activities.

field phenotyping, genome wide association studies and use of DNA markers, software for data analysis and management.

30. At the time of preparation of this report, a total of 6 710 farmers, scientists, breeders, extension agents, governmental officials and students have been involved in more than 300 training sessions for a total duration of 367 days<sup>3</sup>.



*Figure 7: Beneficiaries involved in training and capacity building*

31. Exchange visits, seed fairs, focus group discussions, international conferences and development of rural extension networks are only a few initiatives currently underway for capacity building. A total of 162 Farmer Field Schools have already been established as learning tools for farmers to acquire knowledge and skills through direct, participatory practices.

32. Farmers and scientists have been involved in characterization, evaluation and participatory varietal selection to harness the potentials coded into the genes of PGRFA so to develop new, resistant crop varieties with superior agronomic and quality traits. A total of 4 040 varieties of wheat, barley, cassava, sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, pigeon pea, ground nuts and apples have been evaluated in farmers' fields or at research stations so to evince resistances to drought, heat, floods and to some biotic stresses such as leaf rust, yellow rust, the hessian fly, blotch, striga, aphids, allosobrochus maculatus etc.

33. These activities have empowered local farming communities to identify genetic diversity in their fields, start the development of new, adapted varieties, select and breed high yielding and adapted varieties and make such planting material available at the community level. In addition, a total of more than 2 300 accessions of wheat, barley, rice and potato have been subject to molecular analysis,

<sup>3</sup> Training sessions consist of workshops, field days and demonstrations, laboratory works, remote training etc.

including phenotyping and genotyping on the basis of promising adaptation to climate change (mainly drought, heat and flood adaptation, plus yellow rust resistance). Genetic diversity and population structure analysis to produce genome wide association mapping studies are ongoing, along with the preparation of passport data.

34. The outcomes of the evaluation and characterization will be further incorporated in activities of crop improvement. Almost 70 % of ongoing projects have reported to be undertaking activities for crop improvement with the aim of incorporating traits to enable coping with heat, drought and floods in order to develop varieties that are high yielding and of good nutritional value.

35. It is expected that as a result of BSF 3 implementation, more than 1 500 of useful alleles of the target crops will be discovered and more than 200 genotypes exploited in the development of new varieties for a total of 380 of useful breeding populations to be developed.

#### **IV. FINALIZATION OF THE SECOND ROUND OF THE PROJECT CYCLE**

36. By 31 December 2016, the activities of all the 28 projects approved for funding in the second round of the BSF project cycle (BSF 2) have been finalized. The Secretariat has received and approved all the final progress and financial reports and disbursed the final payments accordingly.

37. Two types of projects have been supported by BSF 2: Strategic Action Plans (Window 1 projects) and Immediate Action Projects ( Window 2 projects). The projects funded in BSF 2 have been approved in 3 different batches, as funding became available:

- The first batch of projects funded became operational in 2012 and consisted of 19 projects (7 Strategic Action Plans and 12 Immediate Action Projects);
- The second batch of projects consisted of 3 Window 1 projects executed by UNDP and that became operational at the end of 2013 when funding became available for such partnership;
- A final batch of favourably appraised projects was approved for funding by the Bureau of the Fifth Session of the Governing Body prior to the Session of the Governing Body (September 2013) and consisted of 8 projects (2 Strategic Action Plans and 6 Immediate Action Projects). Six projects became operational throughout 2014<sup>4</sup>.

38. An estimated 1.000.000<sup>5</sup> people (mainly farmers) have directly benefited from implementation of project portfolio. Farmers and their organizations have been directly involved in collection, characterization, evaluation and development of new varieties of targeted crops, training and capacity building, participatory variety selection, plant breeding and establishment of community seed banks.

39. As part of the execution of Window 1 projects, a total of 26 Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) have been developed in 35 countries in order to establish priorities, through advanced planning and future investment, for sustainable management and conservation of genetic diversity. Strategic planning, the development of a consensus on priorities within a wide stakeholder community, and the

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<sup>4</sup> In 2012, 8 project proposals were favourably appraised by the Panel of Experts to be funded when resources became available in the Benefit-sharing Fund. Additional resources of USD 2 562 210 became available during 2013. Six out of the eight project proposals expressed their willingness and capacity to implement activities under the approved projects. The executing institution for the project PR-22-Brazil *Crioula Seeds, Quilombola Resistance: building food sovereignty in the Caatinga bioma*, informed the Secretariat that they did not have the capacity to implement the project any longer and therefore declined the funding. The executing institution for the regional project PR-172-Iran *Utilization of chickpea and lentil genetic resources for adapting to climate change in the CWANA region* informed the Secretariat that due to operational problems in the Region, including insecurity levels, the project had to be postponed.

<sup>5</sup> The sources of the statistical data presented throughout this document are the progress reports and monitoring questionnaires submitted by executing institutions of BSF2 throughout the implementation period.

progressive build-up of skills, knowledge and technologies have been promoted as crucial steps to build resilience and adaptive capacity in marginalized and vulnerable communities around the world. In the spirit of the established partnership between the Treaty and UNDP, three national SAPs have been developed in Kenya, Namibia and Philippines that have been integrated in broader long-term UNDP sponsored programmes for climate change adaptation and resilience.

40. As part of the implementation of BSF 2, over 3 000 maps have been produced, two regional databases of local crop diversity, as well as an atlas, documenting genetic variety, erosion and climate changes. Almost 30 baseline studies, scientific evaluations and surveys were conducted, diagnosing regional climate change risks, assessing food insecurity, genetic erosion, household vulnerability and local needs. Moreover, over 10 new databases have been created to document farmers' varieties in the project implementation areas, raising awareness of local diversity, contributing to the transfer of knowledge and providing a baseline for the monitoring of genetic erosion.

41. One of the underlying characteristics of the BSF 2 projects has been the ability to establish multiple level partnerships between a wide range of institutions. The BSF 2 executing institutions have been working with more than 250 partnering institutions among universities, institutes for biodiversity conservation, international organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, donor agencies, genebanks and national and international research institutes. These partnership arrangements have optimized various forms of engagement to provide for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and fostered a sense of local ownership and accountability.

42. A total of 640 287<sup>6</sup> farmers have been directly involved in field activities, surveys, seed fairs, community biodiversity registers, training and capacity building, participatory variety selection, plant breeding and establishment of community seed banks in more than 1 110 villages and districts. 50 community seed banks storing a total of 1 200 crop varieties of rice, wheat, maize, beans, sorghum, potato, black gram, chili, bottle gourd and pumpkin have been created as a platform for stable access and availability of seeds at community level, conserving and restoring local varieties as well as sharing of agricultural biodiversity, knowledge and expertise.

43. Throughout the BSF 2 farmers, scientists and breeders have worked together to identify genetic diversity, develop new and adapted varieties through characterization and evaluation of more than 3 100 accessions of crops that are crucial for food security. In general, the material has been characterized using both traditional and scientific methods with the aim of identifying accessions and traits that perform particularly well under local conditions, taking into special consideration the increasing impacts of drought, heat and cold, and increased occurrence of pests and diseases.

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<sup>6</sup> The source of these data are the progress reports and monitoring questionnaires submitted by executing institutions of BSF 2 throughout the implementation period.

	<p><b><i>Increased availability of locally adapted rice varieties in local communities in Bhutan</i></b></p> <p>Ganglapong community in Mongar Dzongkhag (Bhutan) was growing only one variety of upland rice known as Kam Bra. This is a traditional variety which presents high yields and good taste and is being cultivated by almost all households in Ganalapong as no other alternative varieties are available at the community level. The BSF 2 project <i>Participatory Conservation &amp; Utilization of Rice Genetic Resources for Livelihood and Food Security</i> aimed at providing more varietal options on the rain-fed rice varieties through participatory variety selection (PVS).</p>
<p>Project farmer inspecting the introduced variety in her farm.</p>	
	<p>As part of the BSF 2 projects, five new upland rice varieties, Machapurchery-3, Chandhanath-1, Zangthi-1, Zangthi-2 and Lumang, have been introduced in the community as means of diversification of agricultural production systems.</p> <p>BSF project beneficiaries have reported an increase in the availability of rice varieties that perform well under harsh environmental conditions, increased yields and quality of food as well as increased adaptive capacity.</p>
<p>Upland rice ready for harvest in one of the project sites.</p>	

44. More than of 300 capacity building workshops and training sessions have been delivered so to enhance human and institutional competences to conserve and sustainably use PGRFA. More than 23 000 among farmers, extension agents, researches and governmental officials have benefited from training sessions on characterization, evaluation and breeding of crop varieties, on-farm conservation and management of PGRFA. Over 20 MSc students have been directly supported through the implementation of Window 1 projects and over 43 student theses – from BSc to PhD – resulted from implementation of the Window 2 projects.

Ram Gopal Sharma is a 41 year old farmer of a village in Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh (India), and a beneficiary of the BSF 2 *Seeds for Life* project executed by Humana People to People India. “In June 2012 I became a member of farmers' clubs under the Seeds for life project”. Following an initial round of training on Participatory Varietal Selection, Ram and other members of his farmers' clubs started out with preparation of varietal trials. The training introduced them to different rice varieties and the nurturing techniques they require. In order to increase the yields, Humana People to People India has also conducted training sessions on System for Rice Intensification (SRI). “This is the first time we used SRI. It helped us minimize the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and water. By combined use of SRI and increased access to improved rice varieties, we have been able to double our yields, says Ram. “Earlier we used to harvest 12-15 q/ha, and today the figure stands at 35q/ha”. Ram is one of the 2330 direct beneficiaries of the BSF 2 *Seeds for Life* project who is today able to afford better education for his children and better quality of food.



System of Rice Intensification, Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh

45. All the projects sponsored in the BSF 2 are targeting crops of high importance for food security both locally and globally. BSF 2 projects have addressed a total of 45 crops, mainly Annex 1 crops. While 4 projects have focused on a single crop the other 24 projects have been managing mixtures / package of crops.

46. Partners, especially of Window 2 projects, have diversified the portfolio of crops being managed as a coping strategy in the face of climate shocks, market uncertainties and food insecurity. The majority of crops addressed are local varieties with potential useful genes for resistances to biotic and abiotic stresses, of high nutritional and market value and therefore form a reservoir for research and breeding purposes.

### Independent Evaluation

47. The *Operational Procedures for the use of resources under the direct control of the Governing Body* include, as the last step of the project cycle, an Independent Evaluation to be carried out at the portfolio level.<sup>7</sup>

48. During this intersessional period the Secretariat has engaged, together with FAO Office of Evaluation, in the planning of the Independent Evaluation of the BSF 2, including in the preparation of the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation (ToRs). The independent evaluation of the BSF 2 has been undertaken following the procedures for reporting, monitoring and evaluation adopted by the Governing Body, at its Fourth Session<sup>8</sup>. The Evaluation covered the first batch of 19 projects that were

<sup>7</sup> Annex 1, Section III of Res. 2/2013 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-be595e.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 3/2011, Annex 1. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-be453e.pdf>

approved for funding in 2012 and that had concluded at the time the independent evaluation commenced. The FAO Office of Evaluation<sup>9</sup> carried out the independent evaluation, including the hiring of the independent experts who undertook the bulk of the work.

49. As specified in the ToRs of the Independent Evaluation, the main purpose of the evaluation was to conduct an independent assessment of the “extent to which the concluded projects funded through the second cycle of the BSF have helped increase food security and community resilience among vulnerable farmers and the rural population in developing countries through the management and conservation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture”.

50. The Evaluation methodology consisted of three phases: inception, field and synthesis of findings to produce the evaluation report. The outcome of the Independent Evaluation is a final report providing a systematic account of the performance of the BSF 2 completed projects.

51. The report is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the scope and purpose of the evaluation and also describes its methodology. Chapter 2 provides the background and context of the second project cycle of the BSF. Chapter 3 presents the key findings based on the Evaluation questions grouped in relation to the following Evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Each Evaluation question begins with the main findings highlighted in a box. Chapter 4 provides the main conclusions, including recommendations based on the analysis of the Evaluation questions. Chapter 5 looks at lessons from the design and implementation of the second project cycle.

52. The recommendations and lessons learned from the Independent Evaluation are intended to contribute to strengthening the programmatic approach of the Benefit-sharing Fund and improve the execution of its future project cycles.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/oed-about/en/>