



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



The International Treaty  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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## RESOLUTION 3/2015

### THE VISION AND THE PROGRAMME OF WORK ON THE GLOBAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

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#### THE GOVERNING BODY,

**Recalling** its previous decisions on the Global Information System and particularly Resolution 10/2013,

**Further recalling** the interlinkages between the Global Information System of Article 17 and the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing as referred to in Article 13.2.a);

**Mindful of** the role of the International Treaty and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as caretakers of agro-biodiversity, including information related to PGRFA;

**Acknowledging** the need to facilitate the documentation and dissemination of PGRFA available in the Multilateral System and its associated information to facilitate research, plant breeding and training subject to applicable law;

**Thanking** the Government of Germany for the financial support provided for COGIS and the Government of Spain for their support to the PGRFA analysis tools during the 2014-2015 biennium;

1. **Adopts** the *Vision* and the *Programme of Work* contained in Annexes 1 and 2 respectively;
2. **Decides** to establish the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System of Article 17 with the terms of references contained in Annex 3. Subject to the availability of financial resources, the Committee will meet at least twice during the 2016-2017 biennium.
3. **Requests** the Secretary to implement the programme of work based on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee, and **further requests** the Secretary to submit to the Governing Body a progress report at each regular session and a proposal for review of the programme of work when appropriate, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee;
4. **Invites** Contracting Parties, other governments and stakeholders to provide the necessary resources to implement a set of pilot activities of the Programme of Work;
5. **Notes that** the Secretariat participates in the Joint Facilitation Unit of the DivSeek initiative, with the view to enabling synergies with the Global Information System in full respect of the provisions of the Treaty, and **requests** the Secretary to continue doing it;

6. **Further requests** the Secretary to invite DivSeek stakeholders to report on the implications for the objectives of the Treaty of the technologies underlying the DivSeek initiative and to compile a synthesis report on this for consideration by the Governing Body at its Seventh Session;
7. **Requests** the Secretary and the Contracting Parties to continue promoting initiatives to support national and regional programmes in the development and transfer of information technologies for, and data analysis of, PGRFA such as CAPFITOGEN and the Platform for Co-development and Transfer of Technologies in support of the programme of work as detailed in Annex 2.
8. **Encourages** the Secretary and the Contracting Parties to promote synergies and connections among existing information systems and national and regional information networks, as well as with the operations of the Multilateral System and the projects funded by the Benefit-sharing Fund for the documentation of PGRFA, as long as they operate in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty;
9. **Requests** the Secretary to design a monitoring and assessment mechanism on the usefulness and effectiveness of the Global Information System according to Article 17.1, subject to availability of resources, based on the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee and present a draft to the next Session of the Governing Body;
10. **Requests** the Secretary to report on the above to the next Session of the Governing Body

*Annex 1***Vision for the Global Information System on PGRFA**

***The Global Information System for PGRFA integrates and augments existing systems to create the global entry point to information and knowledge for strengthening the capacity for PGRFA conservation, management and utilization.***

The development of a truly effective Global Information System as foreseen in the International Treaty involves, *inter alia*: strengthening existing systems and, where gaps remain, establishing new systems and initiatives; promoting inter-connectivity among systems; and providing overarching mechanisms to ensure ready access to the information and services provided. This translates into the following objectives:

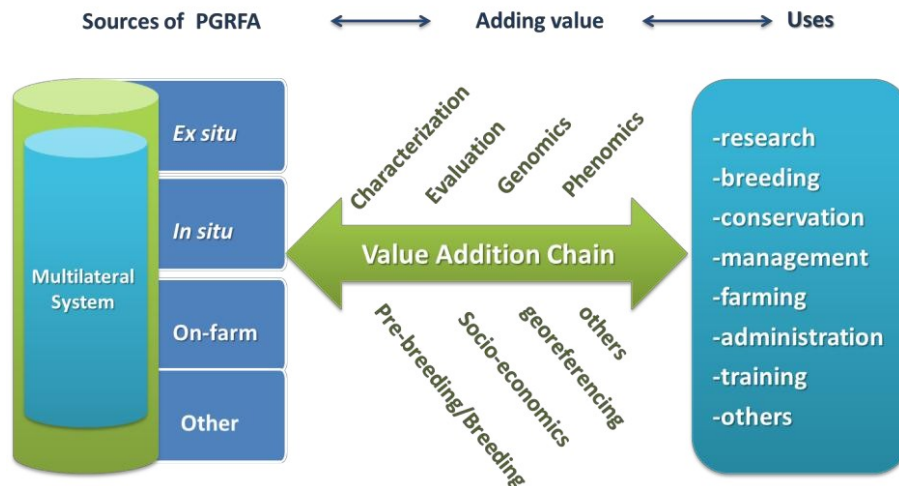
- 1-To create a web-based platform with use-oriented entry points to PGRFA information;
- 2-To provide a comprehensive overview and facilitate access to sources of PGRFA and associated information;
- 3-To promote and facilitate interoperability among existing systems by providing clear principles, technical standards and appropriate tools to support their operations in accordance to the principles and rules of the Treaty;
- 4-To promote transparency on the rights and obligations of users for accessing, sharing and using PGRFA associated information and to establish ways to exercise those rights and obligations within the Global Information System;
- 5-To create and enhance opportunities for communication and international and multidisciplinary collaboration to increase knowledge about and add value to PGRFA;
- 6-To provide capacity development and technology transfer opportunities for the conservation, management and use of PGRFA and associated information and knowledge paying special attention to the needs of developing countries;
- 7-To create a mechanism to assess progress and monitor effectiveness of the Global Information System.

## Annex 2

**Programme of Work on the Global Information System (2016-2022)**

The Programme of Work will cover an initial period of six years. It will be implemented through a phased approach and funded through extra budgetary contributions.

The value chain of PGRFA, illustrating the components of and linkages between the three elements of the value chain, namely the sources of PGRFA, adding value, and using PGRFA.

**1-To create a web-based platform with use-oriented entry points to PGRFA information**

- To set up the technical infrastructure needed for the development of the Platform;
- To engage with FAO, the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol and other organizations to build on the experience accumulated on the development of global portals;
- To define use case scenarios for target groups and set up mechanisms to get feedback from them;
- To create a prototype of the global portal able to receive feedback from the users on the SMTA material;

**2-To provide a comprehensive overview and facilitate access to sources of PGRFA and associated information**

- To create an index of sources of information, knowledge and other materials;
- To strengthen the capacity of genebanks and other providers to document their holdings using traditional and modern methods and to facilitate access to that information and to the genetic resources in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty;
- To enable recipients of PGRFA to make available to the MLS all non-confidential information according to applicable law that results from their research and development carried out on the material received, in compliance with their obligation under SMTA Art 6.9;
- To allow quick access to information on the material available in the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing (MLS) at sample level;
- To strengthen capacity to develop national and regional inventories and information systems and networks.

**3-To promote and facilitate interoperability among existing systems by providing clear principles, technical standards and appropriate tools to support their operations in accordance to the principles and rules of the Treaty;**

- a. To develop a common standard for Permanent Unique Identifiers applied to PGRFA and an operational mechanism to promote the adoption of DOIs;
- b. To develop further training and capacity development material, including e-learning material, in collaboration with other relevant organizations;
- c. To recommend common standards for data and metadata and develop further standards (e.g. for phenotypic data) based on existing experiences in other sectors;
- d. To establish functional connections with other initiatives relevant for the adoption of open data and standards to PGRFA;
- e. To develop the technical standards required for interoperability between different PGRFA information management systems;

**4-To promote transparency on the rights and obligations of users for accessing, sharing and using PGRFA associated information and to establish ways to exercise those rights and obligations within the Global Information System;**

- a. To analyse the institutional, organizational, policy and legal factors for PGRFA information access, sharing and use in the context of the Treaty's provisions, in particular Articles 12 and 13;
- b. To understand the applicability and impacts of models developed in other parts of the Treaty, such as the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit Sharing, and initiatives such as DivSeek.

**5-To create and enhance opportunities for communication and international and multidisciplinary collaboration to increase knowledge about and add value to PGRFA**

- a. To identify and create tools, mechanisms and opportunities for communication and collaboration with partners and users of the system (media, mailing lists, etc);
- b. To conduct focused surveys with a wide range of users and validation methods;
- c. To strengthen the linkages among stakeholders to concentrate research on high-priority germplasm jointly identified by them;

**6-To provide capacity development and technology transfer opportunities for the conservation, management and use of PGRFA and associated information and knowledge paying special attention to the needs of developing countries**

- a. To convey and support regional meetings and scientific conferences related to new technologies and themes;
- b. To provide access to training materials for capacity development;
- c. To support the training of staff in areas such as taxonomy, information management and bioinformatics in collaboration with relevant partners;
- d. To design mechanisms to promote training opportunities across institutions (training of trainers, match-making);
- e. To provide training for the genebank managers of the future;
- f. To facilitate transfer of relevant technologies to developing countries;
- g. To raise awareness among stakeholders in the Global Information System on traditional knowledge relevant to PGRFA in accordance with the Treaty's provisions and in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity

**7. To create a mechanism to assess progress and monitor effectiveness of the Global Information System**

- a. To implement a feedback system for the portal in order to allow assessments of the usefulness and effectiveness of the Global Information System;
- b. To promote periodic consultations among Contracting Parties, and stakeholders, users and providers, about the usefulness and effectiveness of the Global Information System.

*Annex 3***Terms of Reference for the Scientific Advisory Committee on Article 17**Objectives

The Governing Body provides guidance on the development and strengthening of the Global Information System, to facilitate the exchange of information, based on existing information systems, on scientific, technical and environmental matters related to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA).

The Scientific Advisory Committee (Committee) shall advise the Secretary on:

- general recommendations on the development and deployment of the Global Information System and its components as adopted by the Governing Body;
- the discovery of new areas of work with potential impact on the System;
- the selection of pilot activities for the Global Information System and, upon request of the Secretary, other initiatives and actions to sustain the operation of the Global Information System, and the further update of the Programme of Work.

In particular, the Committee shall provide scientific advice to the Secretary on the following items:

1. the effectiveness and efficiency of the Global Information System as a mechanism to promote advice regarding scientific, technical and environmental cooperation on PGRFA matters;
2. the exchange of PGRFA-related information and the transfer of publicly available expertise, technology and scientific cooperation;
3. scientific and technical components of the Global Information Systems and its Programme of Work as recommended by the Governing Body;
4. cooperation with other relevant international and regional scientific and technical cooperation and technology transfer initiatives, including the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing House Mechanism of the Nagoya Protocol;
5. means to facilitate the implementation of the Global Information System at the national level and the establishment of a Stakeholder Platform;
6. scientific, technical and environmental cooperation and benefits of all the Treaty activities, including the Multilateral System and Access and Benefit-sharing and the Programme of Work on Sustainable Use

Subject to the availability of financial resources, the Committee will hold two meetings per biennium.

Composition

The Committee is composed of:

- up to 2 scientific experts from each Region, nominated by the Vice-chairpersons of the Governing Body of each respective Region;
- 10 additional scientific and technical experts appointed by the Secretary including experts suggested by the regions and relevant stakeholders, taking into account the required range of technical expertise and regional balance as appropriate.

The members shall be selected for their scientific expertise and understanding of the Global Information System and the International Treaty, taking into account the need for specialized and in-depth expertise including: bioinformatics and molecular genetics; the 'omics', in particular genomics, phenomics and proteomics; management of environmental and geo-spatial data about plant genetic resources; scientific,

taxonomy, crop wild relatives and genebank management and *ex situ*, *in situ* and on-farm conservation of PGRFA, technical cooperation; capacity-building; system integration, information exchange and data sharing; fair and equitable benefit sharing and legal expertise in the relevant international law and regulations; partnerships with other organizations, institutions and initiatives.

The Committee shall elect its Co-chairpersons from among the experts.

The Secretariat of the International Treaty will facilitate the work of the Committee and report to the Governing Body.

The mandate and the composition of the Committee may be renewed by the Governing Body at its Seventh Session.