



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



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

Item 12 of the Provisional Agenda

TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023

Report on the Implementation of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Executive Summary

At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body acknowledged the paramount importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the vital role of their conservation and sustainable use in addressing global challenges, including food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change adaptation, and poverty alleviation. The Governing Body reconvened the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee or ACSU), with specific terms of reference, and assigned a number of tasks to the Secretary.

This document summarizes the work done and the activities undertaken in response to the requests of the Governing Body, and provides information on related processes. This document also reflects the recommendations made by the Committee on addressing the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

The Report of the Committee on its work is contained in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.1, while the Concept Note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA is contained in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.2. Both documents should be considered together with the present document.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and, in particular, to:

- consider and approve the Concept Note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA, as provided in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.2;
- endorse the future strategies to address the bottleneck and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6, including its summary information in the *Appendix II* to the *Annex* to this document;
- reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA; and
- provide any further guidance it considers appropriate for the further enhancement of conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

In doing so, the Governing Body is invited to adopt a Resolution, taking into account the recommendations of the Committee, contained in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.1, as well as the elements provided in *Annex* to this document.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body acknowledged the paramount importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the vital role of their conservation and sustainable use in addressing global challenges, including food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change adaptation, and poverty alleviation.¹ The Governing Body noted, that the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which was then to be adopted, will contribute to the enhancement of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and, likewise, the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty will also contribute to the Framework's goals and targets.²
2. It also reconvened the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.³
3. This document summarizes the work done and the activities undertaken in response to the requests of the Governing Body with regard to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and provides information on related processes.

II. THE AD HOC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

4. The Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee or ACSU) was reconvened by the Governing Body with two main tasks:⁴
 - i. Provide inputs to the Secretariat for the revision and finalization of the Concept Note of the Joint Programme;
 - ii. Develop suggestions on future strategies to address the bottlenecks identified in the Background Study, for the consideration of the Governing Body at its Tenth Session.
5. The Committee held two meetings during this biennium, both in virtual modality. The seventh meeting was held from 14 - 15 March 2023, and the eighth meeting from 5 - 6 July 2023.
6. The report of the Committee to the Governing Body is available in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.1, *Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to the Tenth Session of the Governing Body*. The report contains the major outcomes of the Committee's discussions, including the recommendations on future strategies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

III. POSSIBLE JOINT PROGRAMME ON BIODIVERSITY IN AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

7. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body took note of the Concept Note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Joint Programme), and tasked the Committee to provide inputs to the Secretariat for the revision and finalization of the Concept Note of the Joint Programme.
8. At its seventh and eighth meetings the Committee made several suggestions for revising the Concept Note of the Joint Programme, in particular, to clarify its objective, expected outcomes, areas and levels of actions, added value, governance and management, and implementation. The Committee also emphasized the importance for the Joint Programme to be action- and results-oriented and agreed on the need to suggest activities and milestones for each area of action of the Joint Programme.

¹ Preambular paragraph, Resolution 6/2022, www.fao.org/3/nk241en/nk241en.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, para. 2.

⁴ Ibid, Annex 1

9. The Committee further agreed that the Joint Programme should take into account the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), recently adopted by the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

10. The revised Concept Note of the Joint Programme, based on the inputs, suggestions, and guidance provided by the Committee is presented in the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.2, *Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*.

IV. FUTURE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE BOTTLENECKS AND CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLES 5 AND 6 OF THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY

11. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Committee will report to the Governing Body on its work for consideration at the Tenth Session. The Committee will also develop suggestions on future strategies to address the bottlenecks identified in the *Background Study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty* presented at the Ninth Session.⁵

12. At its seventh and eighth meetings, the Committee developed suggestions on possible future strategies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty. These include:⁶

- Possible development by the Committee of voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
- Elaboration of an inclusive process to develop voluntary guidelines during the next biennium, possibly including a global symposium and expert input or small groups to address each type of bottleneck; and
- The development of a mechanism to identify the levels and forms of implementation, and assisting countries in need of support in implementing Articles 5 and 6, according to specific contexts and local needs.

13. The Committee also discussed the summary information of the future strategies prepared by the Secretariat, detailing possible methodological approaches and activities that could be carried out in implementing each of the possible future strategies.⁷

14. The Committee incorporated textual suggestions in the summary of the future strategies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, as provided in Annex I of the document, IT/GB-10/23/12.1, *Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture to the Tenth Session of the Governing Body*.

15. The summary of the future strategies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, is also reproduced and presented in *Appendix II to the Annex* of this document.

V. THE NEW PROTOTYPE OF THE TOOLBOX FOR SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

About the Toolbox

16. The Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA (Toolbox) is an online database of resources on the management and sustainable use of PGRFA. It contains publications, reports, research and studies, and other relevant information resources from various institutions and entities from around the world, including research and academic institutions, intergovernmental bodies, and both national and international agricultural

⁵ IT/GB-9/22/12/Inf.2, Background Study on the Bottlenecks and Challenges to the Implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

⁶ IT/GB-10/ACSU-7/23/Report, www.fao.org/3/cc5292en/cc5292en.pdf; IT/GB-10/ACSU-8/Report. <https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1628021/>

⁷ IT/GB-10-ACSU-8/23/3

research institutions. It was launched in 2017 and, since then, the Secretariat has continued to populate it with relevant and latest information resources on the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

17. At its fifth and sixth meetings, the Committee acknowledged the importance of the Toolbox and made several suggestions to improve the operational aspects, use, and effectiveness of the Toolbox.

18. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body welcomed the updates and improvements in the usability, relevance, and effectiveness of the Toolbox, and also took note of the new prototype of the Toolbox, as well as the related communication and visibility plan.

The New Prototype of the Toolbox

19. During the past biennium the Secretariat launched the new prototype of the Toolbox. It is now incorporated into the Global Information System (GLIS) Portal.⁸ Access to the Toolbox continues to be available through the website of the International Treaty, with the current navigation structure.

20. The new features and functions of the Toolbox facilitate enhanced browsing experiences and allow for more accurate and extensive monitoring, e.g., to produce regular statistics and analytics on its use, among others, relying on improved search functions and an option to export the list of found resources in a format that allows users for offline browsing in Microsoft Excel or in any similar spreadsheet application.

21. A User Guide is also made available to assist prospective and new users in browsing and searching the desired information resources in the Toolbox.⁹

22. The Secretariat continues to update the information resources available in the Toolbox. As of 31 July 2023, there are 1 838 information resources.¹⁰ The number of visitors to the Toolbox recorded from 19 December 2022 to 31 July 2023 has reached 5 308.

VI. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

23. During the biennium, the Secretariat continued to collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders and partners, both within and outside FAO, to support projects and initiatives that promote capacity development and innovative approaches to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

24. The Secretariat continued to collaborate, cooperate and liaise with the Secretariats of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity. As follow-up to the [First International Multi-Stakeholder Symposium on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Technical Consultation on *in situ* conservation and on-farm management of PGRFA](#) held in March 2021, the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Commission co-organised a webinar on the role of the conservation and sustainable use of crop wild relatives and wild food plants, in February 2023.¹¹ Participants in the webinar shared and discussed examples of the continuum of management practices for wild plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, from their conservation to use in breeding improved crop varieties.

25. The Secretariat also collaborated on specific activities and initiatives with the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR),¹² and the CGIAR Centers,¹³ as well as with other relevant stakeholders.¹⁴

26. Additionally, within the context of FAO technical cooperation,¹⁵ the Secretariat collaborated and liaised with other units and decentralized offices to provide technical and policy guidance aimed at

⁸ glis.fao.org/glis/

⁹ Toolbox for Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA, User Guide, www.fao.org/3/cc5944en/cc5944en.pdf

¹⁰ English, 1 632; French, 107; and Spanish 99.

¹¹ www.fao.org/cgrfa/news/news-detail/webinar-wild-plant-genetic-resources-for-food-and-agriculture-their-conservation-and-use/en.

¹² The collaboration focuses on PGRFA documentation, information exchange, the provision of inputs for strategic documents and the participation in training workshops and Thematic Working Groups.

¹³ For example: Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, as partner/convenor of capacity-building activities, e.g. Live Session “Genetic Resources Policies for CGIAR Scientists”, 1 March until 10 May 2023

¹⁴ See IT/GB-10/23/16.4, Report of Cooperation with Other International Bodies and Organizations

¹⁵ Details of collaboration is provided in IT/GB-10/23/15. Report from FAO on its Contribution to the Implementation of the International Treaty.

improving implementation and strengthening policy and institutional frameworks for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.¹⁶

The Secretariat also continued to partner with academic and research institutions, in particular supporting field projects and advanced research aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.¹⁷ The majority of these field projects promote innovative approaches to conservation, management, and characterization of genetic resources, crop diversification, environmental and agrobiodiversity preservation, and fair economic development through the valorisation of local crops.

VII. CAPACITY-BUILDING AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

27. At its Ninth Session, the Governing Body requested the Secretary “to continue facilitate training and capacity building aimed at advancing characterization and sustainable use of PGRFA, including the assessment of needs of local farmers and other relevant stakeholders and the identification of possible means to address the local needs”.

28. The Secretariat continued to reach out and promote the conservation and sustainable Use of PGRFA as set out in Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.¹⁸

29. The Government of Italy continues to provide substantial financial resources and significant in-kind support to the implementation of these activities as well as the overall work track on Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, among other areas.

VIII. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

30. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the information contained in this document and, in particular, to:

- consider and approve the Concept Note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of PGRFA; and
- endorse future strategies to address the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.

31. In this context, the Governing Body may wish to reconvene the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and is invited to consider the elements provided in the *Appendix* to the *Annex* to this document in establishing the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

32. The Governing Body is also invited to provide any further guidance it considers appropriate for the effective implementation of Articles 5 and 6, and to adopt a Resolution, taking into account the recommendations of the ACSU, as contained in the document, IT/GB-9/22/12.1, as well as the draft elements provided in the *Annex* to this document.

¹⁶ For example, project development and resource mobilization, funded through the bilateral and multilateral financing institutions.

¹⁷ These projects include:

- INCREASE project: www.pulsesincrease.eu/
- European Evaluation Network (EVA) on wheat/barley: www.ecpgr.cgiar.org/resources/european-evaluation-network/eva-workshop-on-wheatbarley/
- RADIANT project, Horizon 2020: www.radiantproject.eu/

¹⁸ For example: (i) co-organized and/or participated in meetings, workshops and trainings to promote the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA; populate the Toolbox with relevant technical and policy resources, and disseminate the use of the Toolbox.

DRAFT RESOLUTION **/2023**IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLES 5 AND 6, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE****THE GOVERNING BODY,**

Acknowledging the paramount importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) and the vital role of their conservation and sustainable use in addressing global challenges, including food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change adaptation, and poverty alleviation;

Taking note that the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty will contribute to the goals and relevant targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and vice versa;

Recalling its previous Resolutions on Conservation and Sustainable Use of PGRFA, in particular, Resolutions 7/2011, 7/2013, 4/2015, 6/2017, 5/2019 and 6/2022;

1. *Takes note* of the Report of the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Committee), and *thanks* the Committee for its work, including defining future strategies to support countries in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty through the possible development or establishment of:
 - voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
 - an inclusive process to develop voluntary guidelines during the next biennium, possibly including a global symposium and expert input or small groups to address each type of bottleneck;
 - a mechanism to identify the levels and forms of implementation and providing assistance to countries in need of support in implementing Articles 5 and 6, according to specific contexts and local needs.
2. *Decides* to reconvene the Committee with the Terms of Reference contained in [Annex I] to this Resolution;
3. *Approves* the revised Concept Note of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity in Agriculture for Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Joint Programme), and *thanks* the Committee, experts and initial partners for their work. The Joint Programme will last for 6 years (2024-2029), in the first instance, and will be reviewed three years from its commencement, expected to be in 2026, with regular progress reports provided at each session of the Governing Body;
4. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Secretary to implement the new prototype of the Toolbox for Sustainable Use of PGRFA (Toolbox) as a useful online database of valuable information for the conservation, management and sustainable use of PGRFA;
5. *Requests* the Secretary to continue to promote, disseminate, regularly update and monitor the Toolbox, and invites Contracting Parties and stakeholders to continue to share information resources and to enhance its utility;
6. *Requests* the Secretary to continue to analyse and monitor the identified gaps and needs highlighted in the Background study on the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, and *calls upon* Contracting Parties to share information on the difficulties and challenges encountered in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, as well as possible new initiatives, activities, and approaches that could be undertaken to address them;

7. **Requests** the Secretary, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, and subject to the availability of financial resources, to:
 - organize regional consultations on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, with a particular focus on identified bottlenecks and possible approaches to address them, and to update Contracting Parties and stakeholders on progress and relevant developments;
 - facilitate and monitor the activities carried out by Contracting Parties, stakeholders, and international organizations in support of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty;
 - continue to facilitate training and capacity building activities and initiatives aimed at advancing the characterization and sustainable use of PGRFA, including the assessment of needs of local farmers and other relevant local stakeholders and the identification of possible means to address those needs;
 - support national programmes and processes in policy development for the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA, and in building partnerships and mobilizing resources;
8. **Calls upon** the Secretary, subject to the availability of financial resources, to continue to collaborate and cooperate with relevant units within FAO, the CBD, the CGIAR Centers, other entities and institutions, such as the national and International Agricultural Research Centres, as well as the public and private sector and civil society, in promoting the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA and in strengthening the interaction between different stakeholders of genetic resources, community and farmer-led activities, and protected area systems;
9. **Calls upon** Contracting Parties to support the activities outlined in this Resolution, including through the provision of financial resources in line with the provisions of Articles 7 and 8 of the International Treaty;
10. **Thanks** the Government of Italy for the generous financial and in-kind support it has continued to provide towards the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty and the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA; and **calls on** Contracting Parties and other donors to provide additional financial resources for the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, in line with the provisions of Articles 7 and 8 of the International Treaty.

Appendix I to the Annex

Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

1. The Ad hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will continue to advise the Secretariat on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty, in particular by:
 - i. providing recommendations on the current work and future strategies to support countries in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6
 - ii. offering advice and promoting the implementation of the Joint Programme on Biodiversity for Sustainable Use of PGRFA;
 - iii. providing inputs to the development of the voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6; and
 - iv. considering the information provided in developing a mechanism or tool that will assist in identifying the levels and forms of implementation and to support countries in need of support in implementing Articles 5 and 6, according to the specific context and local needs.
2. The Committee will comprise up to five members each from Africa, Region, Asia Region, Europe Region, Latin America and the Caribbean Region; three from the Near East Region; and two each from the North America Region and the South West Pacific Region; as well as technical experts designated by the Bureau, comprising of seven experts, based on proposals by the FAO Regions, and up to three representatives from relevant stakeholders, in particular farmers' organizations, taking into account the required range of technical expertise, and regional and gender balance. Two Co-Chairpersons from Contracting Parties to the International Treaty will form part of the Committee – one from a developing country and one from a developed country. The two Co-Chairpersons shall be in addition to the members of the Committee nominated by the Regions. The Governing Body delegates the authority to designate the Co-Chairpersons to the Bureau of the Eleventh Session.
3. The Committee may hold up to two meetings in the next biennium, one of which is a physical meeting subject to the availability of financial resources. The Secretary will facilitate the process and assist the Committee in its work.
4. The Committee will report to the Governing Body on its work for further consideration at the Eleventh Session.

Appendix II to the Annex

Summary information on Future Strategies to address the bottlenecks to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty

- ***Development of voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty***

What are voluntary guidelines?

1. Voluntary guidelines are non-prescriptive and can be a reference, tool, or set of principles and internationally accepted standards for responsible practices.¹⁹ They are focused on promoting and facilitating better implementation by providing a framework that States can use when developing their strategies, policies, legislation, programmes, and activities. They allow government authorities, the private sector, civil society, and citizens to assess whether their proposed actions and the actions of others constitute acceptable practices.
2. In FAO, almost all sectoral programmes and thematic areas have developed and endorsed policy recommendations, frameworks of action, voluntary guidelines or options.
3. FAO has prepared voluntary guidelines on a wide range of topics related biodiversity for food and agriculture, including the right to adequate food, and many other areas in natural resources management.²⁰ Some of the voluntary guidelines and frameworks, endorsed by FAO, that are of relevance to Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty.²¹
4. Within the International Treaty, the most recent and relevant process that may be exemplary was the development of the *Options for encouraging, guiding and promoting the realization of Farmers' Rights as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty*.²²

What could the voluntary guidelines for implementing Articles 5 and 6 cover?

5. The voluntary guidelines²³ for implementing Articles 5 and 6 can, for instance, primarily focus on providing practical solutions to address the commonly encountered bottlenecks and challenges in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. The practical solutions shall serve as a guide and can be tailored by the intended users,²⁴ according to their specific contexts and needs.
6. In preparing the voluntary guidelines, it may include components or elements such as:
 - Definition of key terms and concepts;
 - Description of the purpose and objectives of the voluntary guidelines;
 - Provision of an overview of its scope, contents, and the bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6;
 - Description of the possible framework of the voluntary guidelines – how these guidelines including examples, can possibly address the bottlenecks and challenges, and their linkages, relevance, and opportunities to support the broader national plans and programs as well as in support to relevant international instruments;

¹⁹ Based on the existing FAO Voluntary guidelines

²⁰ There is an extensive list of voluntary guidelines within FAO, for example:

- The Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture develops codes, standards, guidelines, voluntary guidelines, available at: www.fao.org/cgrfa/policies/global-instruments/codes-standards-and-guidelines/en/;
- The Committee on World Food Security develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics, available at: www.fao.org/efs/policy-products/en/

²¹ Page 7 of IT/GB-10/ACSU-8/23/3, Appendix 1. Available at: www.fao.org/3/cc6693en/cc6693en.pdf

²² In 2022, the *Options for encouraging, guiding and promoting the realization of Farmers Rights, as set out in Article 9 of the International Treaty*, was noted by the Governing Body at its Ninth Session. Available at: www.fao.org/3/cc4085en/cc4085en.pdf

²³ The term “voluntary guidelines” means a set guiding notes, actions and activities that can be chosen voluntarily. Guidelines and similar documents within FAO aim to assist countries to achieve objectives of international agreements or to assist countries to achieve specific objectives.

²⁴ Such as, Contracting Parties, public and private institutions, policymakers, civil society organizations, development practitioners and interested stakeholders working on conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA.

- Indication of how the voluntary guidelines can be operationalised, implemented, monitored, and evaluated, and by whom; and
- The inclusive and participatory process/approach for the preparation of the voluntary guidelines, or how the guidelines were developed.

- ***Elaboration of an inclusive process to develop voluntary guidelines during the next biennium, possibly including a global symposium and expert input or small groups to address each type of bottleneck;***

7. At the last meeting of ACSU, members and experts expressed the following views and ideas that may be useful to ensure an inclusive process in the development of voluntary guidelines on the implementation of Articles 5 and 6:

- Conduct of a global symposium
- Conduct of regional consultations
- Call for regional expert groups by thematic area, as per identified bottlenecks in the Background Study

8. In addition to the above ideas, the Secretariat outlines an overview of possible pathways to elaborate an inclusive process, as follows:

- Commission a small team of consultants that will lead the preparation of:
 - (i) an annotated outline of the voluntary guidelines;
 - (ii) provide inputs to the bottlenecks and challenges that will feed into the development of the voluntary guidelines; and
 - (iii) a zero-draft document.
- Establish a small Working Group (or Expert Group) with regional representative experts, with terms of reference, among others, to:
 - (i) provide ideas on the process of elaborating the guidelines; and
 - (ii) provide expert inputs to the content of the voluntary guidelines.
- Develop a work plan/timeline for implementing a step-wise elaboration of developing the voluntary guidelines.

9. Furthermore, the development of the voluntary guidelines or options shall follow an inclusive and participatory process, including capitalizing on the analysis of each bottleneck and challenge, organizing a series of regional consultations, and a symposium, as suggested by the Committee. An outline of the possible work plan and activities to elaborate an inclusive process for developing the voluntary guidelines is presented below:

Possible work plan for elaborating the development of the voluntary guidelines or options.

Activities	Year 1 (2024)				Year 2 (2025)			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Preparatory work and desk studies Updating the Background Study conducted in 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing the outline, checking additional information/revalidating the bottlenecks based on the additional compliance reports received, if any 								
Regional Consultations (7 regions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regional consultations, to seek common understanding/commonalities/characteristics of each bottlenecks and challenges within the region and all the regions, to gather essential information such as approaches, practices, experiences 								

and lessons learned that can feed into the process of developing the guidelines • Expected output: Zero Draft document								
Global Symposium • Presentation of the Zero Draft working document, Global Symposium • Expected Output: Draft working document								
Review of the Committee • Draft working document								
Endorsement, GB-11 • Endorsement of the Draft document at its Eleventh Session								

- *Undertake detailed analysis on the current state of implementation of Articles 5 and 6 of the International Treaty at regional level, and develop a mechanism to identify levels and forms of implementation and to support countries in need of support in implementing Articles 5 and 6, according to specific context and local needs;*

10. The Background study identified four main types of bottlenecks to the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. A brief overview of the bottlenecks is reproduced below.

Overview of the bottlenecks and challenges in the implementation of Articles 5 and 6

Policy, legal and institutional issues	Scientific and technical issues	Operational and resources constraints	Market issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of an enabling, efficient, integrated, and comprehensive national legal and policy framework to promote the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA; • poor implementation of laws, policies, and/or strategies; • limited inter-sectoral coordination; • lack of legal and policy expertise; and • lack of awareness of the importance of PGRFA and the International Treaty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of access to technologies for information management; • lack of reliable data and information; • lack of scientific interest in specific types of crops and varieties; and • lack of activities in certain areas of conservation and use of PGRFA, for instance, regeneration of ex-situ accessions and agro-morphological characterization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of adequate equipment and storage facilities; • poor operation of gene banks; • lack of technical capacities and human resources; and • lack of financial resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevalence of commercial varieties, resulting in the disappearance of traditional varieties; • lack of adequate marketing opportunities for landraces/farmers' varieties; • disconnect between farmers and the market; • asymmetric power distribution in the value chain; and • lack of negotiation skills of farmers and producers

11. While the above bottlenecks are found in all regions, the extent or degree of constraints, gaps, needs or challenges varies greatly among and within the regions. Based on this account, developing a mechanism

to identify and support countries with the greatest challenges shall require further in-country study to understand the most pressing bottlenecks which may require attention and action.

Developing a mechanism and detailing the bottlenecks, possibly at the country level

12. It may be recalled that the primary sources of information used to identify the bottlenecks and challenges to Articles 5 and 6 in the Bottleneck Study were the questionnaire's responses provided by the Contracting Parties in their National Compliance Reports and other available information within the International Treaty.²⁵ Considering that these sources of information are quite limited, a detailed in-country assessment of bottlenecks and challenges may be necessary.

13. In this regard, developing a mechanism may be facilitated by the provision of a tool for an in-depth, in-country self-assessment of bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6.

14. The self-assessment of bottlenecks and challenges, countries should adopt a multi-stakeholder participatory process. Such a process may also be helpful for the identification of gaps and needs in the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA. Engagement of national and local institutions and stakeholders may be necessary, particularly in determining the bottlenecks and challenges, and possible capacity development needs.

15. The country may wish to do a more detailed and comprehensive assessment following its priorities, needs, opportunities, and availability of resources. A possible framework of the self-assessment tool is provided below.

Possible framework of a self-assessment tool for bottlenecks and challenges to the implementation of Articles 5 and 6.

16. For the purpose of defining a mechanism to identify levels and forms of implementation and to support countries in need of support in implementing Articles 5 and 6, the Secretariat summarises a possible framework to do an in-depth analysis of the bottlenecks and challenges at the country level. The framework can be modified according to the specificities and contexts.

A brief overview of a possible in-country level assessment of bottlenecks and challenges.



The state of implementation, bottlenecks, and challenges	What are the main challenges?	Ideas and support required to address the identified bottlenecks?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, legal and institutional issues • Scientific and technical issues • Operational and resources constraints • Market issues • Any other challenges 	<p>Define the rating, and assign a qualitative/ quantitative rating for each of the identified bottleneck.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions for addressing the bottlenecks • Time frame for addressing the bottlenecks: immediate- medium- and long-term.

²⁵ Regional Treaty webinars, training workshops, and the results of the global survey held in 2015. For details, see item IV of the document IT/GB-9/22/12/Inf.2, available at: www.fao.org/3/cc2057en/cc2057en.pdf

