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The International Treaty  
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES  
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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

**EIGHTH MEETING OF THE *AD-HOC* ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE  
FUNDING STRATEGY**

**Rome, Italy, 20-21 March 2017**

**ELEMENTS OF THE MID-TERM PLAN OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND**

This document contains *Elements for the Mid-term Plan for the Benefit-sharing Fund*.

The *Ad Hoc* Committee on the Funding Strategy, at its seventh meeting, emphasized the importance of having a medium term plan for the use of resources under the Benefit-sharing Fund that would be similar to models of other funds, to be able to concentrate in a coherent and focused manner on areas of the highest priority and expected impact. The plan was developed to cover an approximate five-year time frame. The Committee advised that for clarity, the midterm programmatic approach suggested by the Governing Body should be considered as a medium term plan. The Governing Body took note of the elements of the *Mid-term Plan for the Benefit-sharing Fund* at its fifth session.

## **DRAFT ELEMENTS FOR THE MID-TERM PLAN FOR THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND**

### **Background**

A vast genetic diversity of crops and their wild relatives underpins agriculture and food security throughout the world. This is a fundamental resource, the use of which enables us to adapt farming to meet new needs; to feed the world's growing population in the face of climate change and diminishing natural resources. No country is self-sufficient in the genetic diversity it needs to meet these challenges and all are dependent on resources originating elsewhere. Recognizing this, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was established in 2004 to promote the conservation, exchange and use of crop diversity for the benefit of all humanity and to ensure that the benefits arising from the use of this diversity are shared equitably.

To ensure success, the Treaty has developed a specific Funding Strategy (Article 18). This includes the Benefit-sharing Fund (Fund) that aims to channel finances under the Funding Strategy of the Treaty to support “*farmers in all countries, especially in developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, who conserve and sustainably utilize plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*”.

In 2007, the Governing Body of the Treaty identified three priority areas for support from the Benefit-sharing Fund:

- *Information exchange, technology transfer and capacity-building;*
- *Managing and conserving plant genetic resources on farm; and,*
- *The sustainable use of plant genetic resources.*

Based on these priorities, in 2009 the Fund put out a first call for proposals. This was followed by a second call in 2011, and a third call is being planned before the end of 2013. In the first two project cycles, the Fund has supported more than 30 projects with activities in more than 40 countries. As of July 2013, total funds mobilized amounted to USD 15.8 million.

The following sections briefly outline the proposed focus and *modus operandi* of the Fund for the period 2015 to 2020. More details will be provided in the Mid-Term Plan. The Mid-Term Plan will develop a concise and simple results framework focused on achieving positive benefits and impacts for farmers and describing the different components of the programme, expected outputs and core indicators. It will include a built-in mechanism that enables the Governing Body to review and update the programmatic approach whenever needed.

### **Focus**

There is near universal agreement that climate change represents one of the main threats to agriculture and food security. Recognizing this, the Benefit-sharing Fund will focus its resources over the next five years, as in the second and third project cycles, on helping resource-poor farmers adapt to the challenges posed by climate change such as high temperatures, water scarcity, and shifting pests and diseases. Through supporting the wise conservation and use of genetic resources, the Fund aims to have a major, positive impact on the lives and food security of large numbers of poor rural families and communities in developing countries.

Over the five years of the plan, the Fund will support projects in three thematic areas, with each area funded through a separate Window:

**Thematic Area 1:** Strategic Planning for Treaty Implementation

**Thematic Area 2:** Farmer Impact Projects

**Thematic Area 3:** The Co-development and Transfer of Technologies

Details of the proportion of the total funding to be provided through each window and how this will evolve over time will be described in the Mid-Term Plan.

### **Thematic Area 1: Strategic Planning for Treaty Implementation**

The deployment of plant genetic resources to help farmers adapt to climate change must be addressed strategically and through sound planning processes. This requires a broad consensus on priorities and a careful articulation of strategies and action plans to address them. This Thematic Area has been established specifically to support the development of such strategic action plans. Plans will be formulated primarily for defined regions or sub-regions and will identify and build on opportunities for international cooperation. They will cover such topics as the conservation and management of wild and cultivated crop diversity (taking into account the crop conservation strategies sponsored by the Global Crop Diversity Trust), plant breeding and the dissemination of seed and other planting material. They will also outline the pathways by which such activities will assist farmers adapt to climate change.

Wherever possible, the strategic action plans will integrate Treaty implementation with broader global, regional or national strategies for food security and climate change and will be implemented as part of a broader policy framework to leverage synergies in both action and financial resources. Through providing a blueprint for conserving and using plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, they will allow the Fund and other resource providers to target funding to the most important challenges and to support activities judged to have the greatest likelihood of success. They will build awareness of the importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and will result in countries being better prepared to participate in the multilateral cooperation underpinned by the Treaty. This will include providing new materials to, and accessing and using material from, the genepool of the Multilateral System of the Treaty, as well as participating in its non-monetary and monetary benefit-sharing mechanisms. The non-monetary benefit-sharing mechanisms that will be catalyzed by these strategic plans range from exchange of information, to capacity-building and training;

### **Thematic Area 2: Farmer Impact Projects**

Projects funded through Thematic Area 2 will result in target communities having increased food security and a better ability to withstand the impact of climate change as a result of improved access to, and ability to manage crop genetic diversity. Projects will aim to have a significant impact in the short term, and will include such activities as community action to conserve local varieties and make them available through the Treaty's multilateral system of exchange and benefit-sharing; the introduction and testing of new varieties from the Treaty's genepool; plant breeding and selection by farmers carried out in partnership with professional plant breeders; and the development and promotion of seed production and dissemination systems. Projects may also involve supportive activities in areas such as information exchange, policy development and capacity building, as well as activities designed to promote the sharing of materials and information with local communities elsewhere.

Farmer Impact projects will focus principally on the crops listed in *Annex I* of the International Treaty although other plant genetic resources may be included if they are important for local food security and adaptation to climate change.

### **Thematic Area 3: The Co-development and Transfer of Technologies**

Technologies are already available, or are being developed at institutions throughout the world, South and North, public and private, which could make a very significant contribution to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources in developing countries. Identifying these technologies and promoting their transfer is a key element in the Treaty's benefit-sharing strategy and is an important area for support by the Fund. This thematic area thus supports projects that aim to bring institutions from different countries together to jointly develop appropriate technology and to transfer it to developing country Contracting Party institutions, in line with the Fund's overall objectives. Transfer of technology does not generally take place in isolation but in the context of a 'package' of activities, which, in addition to the technology itself, also includes the exchange of information, training programmes and the building of human and institutional capacity.

Window 3 will support a wide range of activities including such areas as the identification of traits of potential value in adaptation to climate change, the genetic improvement of local varieties and material from the Treaty's multilateral system, improved methods for breeding or conservation, systematic training and know-how transfer for stakeholders on plant genetic resources, technology for the multiplication and distribution of disease-free seed and planting materials, information management systems that support the discovery and use of traits and/or climate models for predicting the possible effects of climate change and identifying climate analogues.

### **Beneficiaries**

The ultimate beneficiaries of all projects supported by the Benefit-Sharing fund will be resource poor farmers, farmer organizations and rural communities in Contracting Party developing countries and countries with economies in transition. They will directly benefit from all projects in Thematic Area 2 and participate in projects in Thematic Areas 1 and 3. All projects are also likely to directly benefit the institutions involved through strengthening their capacity to plan and undertake activities in the conservation and use of plant genetic resources in relation to the implementation of the Treaty.

### **Synergies**

The proposed focus, thematic areas and *modus operandi* connect and synchronize the functioning of the Fund with other operational systems of the Treaty in order to coherently support climate change adaptation of agricultural plant genetic resources for the benefit of smallholder farmers. By connecting the operations of the Fund with the other unique systems of the Treaty (in particular the Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and the global information system), these elements of the Mid-Term Plan position the Treaty as the only global instrument which can coherently and systematically deliver an integrated package of inputs which developing countries and their farming communities need to adapt their food crops to climate change: (1) climate-ready germplasm and genetic material through facilitated access under the Multilateral System; (2) climate adaptation technology for crops through technology transfer as non-monetary benefit-sharing under the Treaty; (3) customized information resources on germplasm and environmental data through the global plant genetic resources information system under the Treaty; and (4) focused adaptation financing for the adaptation of crops through the Fund. By connecting the diverse delivery mechanisms of the Treaty under the overall goal of climate adaptation support to farmers in developing countries, these thematic areas enable the Treaty to leverage synergies among its unique systems to maximize the Fund's impact on one of the most urgent challenges for agriculture and food security in our time.

### **Outputs and impact**

Outputs foreseen from projects supported by the Fund include:

- The genepool of the Multilateral System is accessed and used to improve the livelihoods of resource-poor farmers;
- New varieties of crops developed and widely grown by resource-poor farmers, that are highly productive, nutritious and better able to withstand the negative effects of climate change, such as drought, heat, water scarcity and flooding;
- As a result of the new varieties, food security is enhanced and farmers' incomes increased and stabilized;
- Information systems are in place that inform farmers about the effects of climate change and how they can adapt their farming practices;
- New technologies are developed, transferred and disseminated that enable farmers and scientists to more efficiently and effectively exploit genetic variation in the development of new varieties, including in response to climate change;
- Genetic diversity of local varieties is conserved by rural communities and in genebanks, and made widely available through the multilateral system of the Treaty;
- Stronger institutions are in place that are better able to implement the Treaty and serve farmers' needs and stakeholders receive focused and systematic training to this effect;
- Implementation of the Treaty is mainstreamed into national and regional policies for food security, climate change, biodiversity and research.

In order to be able to monitor outputs and impact, all projects will collect appropriate baseline information and will include impact pathways, quantifiable milestones and indicators.

### **Resourcing the Fund**

In 2009, the Governing Body welcomed the *Strategic Plan for the implementation of the Benefit-sharing Fund* that established a funding target of USD 116 million over a five-year period ending in 2014. While the *Strategic Plan* sets out a resource mobilization strategy for the Fund, there is no equivalent spending strategy, which is the ultimate objective of this Mid-term Plan. The strategies for resource mobilization and use of the Fund need to be better coordinated and planned in the future, as they are mutually dependent. It is intended that ultimately the major source of finances for the Benefit-sharing fund will arise from the commercialization of products using genetic diversity from the Multilateral System. However, it is unlikely that in the short-term such finances will be sufficient to meet the enormous challenges outlined above. Thus the development and implementation of the Mid-term Plan will need to be tailored to attract additional voluntary contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund.

### **Partners**

The Governing Body has welcomed the establishment of partnerships with international organizations to enhance the impact and capacity of the Benefit-sharing Fund. The role and contributions of these partners and the partnership architecture for the Benefit-sharing Fund will be featured in the Mid-Term Plan.

### **Conclusions**

If successful, the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty will be able to make a huge impact on the lives of some of the worlds poorest communities – and those that are most affected by the negative consequences of climate change. Through supporting the conservation and wise use of plant genetic resources, the Fund will be able to bring to bear the best that science and technology has to offer to one of the most urgent and critical challenges of our time.