



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The International Treaty
ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES
FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Terms of Reference for the Scientific Advisory Committee on Article 17¹

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.

For the 2020-2021 biennium, the Committee shall also:

7. review, as may be required, the Programme of Work on GLIS for the consideration of the Governing Body at its Ninth Session;
8. continue considering scientific and technical issues of relevance to DSI/GSD, and considering national legislation, as appropriate;

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

¹Resolutions [IT/GB-6/15/Res 3](#) and [IT/GB-8/19/Res 4](#).

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.