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## **Regulation of the access to genetic resources of natural and historical value and sharing the benefits of their utilisation to favour conservation efforts**

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All living organisms contain or produce structures, genetic material and other chemicals that could be potentially useful to humans in various sectors. In the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), these resources are collectively termed genetic resources. Benefits which may be gained from their uses may range from a better understanding of the natural world to the development of a wide range of products and services for human benefit, including medicines, food additives as well as agricultural and environmental practices and techniques. Genetic resources as well as innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities associated with these resources have in the past been utilised by the industries. However, on various occasions, this was done with inadequate sharing of the benefits with the providers. The Nagoya Protocol of the CBD aims to ensure that access and benefit sharing for the use of genetic resources takes place fairly and transparently. The organisms in which these useful resources are found often make up complex and delicately-balanced ecosystems which can be threatened or endangered by overexploitation. The regulation of the access to these organisms and how benefits from their utilisation are shared, can create incentives for their conservation and sustainable use as well as contribute to the creation of a fairer and more equitable economy to support sustainable development. The Nagoya Protocol, implemented in the EU and Malta by the Regulation (EU) 511/2014 and Subsidiary Legislation 549.111, established a system which recognises ownership of genetic resources to their sovereign states and requires that benefits gained from their utilisation in research and development activities are fair, transparent and based on global cooperation principles.

This communication will present an overview of the Plant Protection Directorate's role in Malta's implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and EU law, as well as the impact of the application of the Nagoya Protocol for other countries. Case studies such as the negotiations on the use of the Hoodia plant from South Africa, which has resulted in monetary and non-monetary benefits for the San peoples, will be discussed.

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