

THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is the first international instrument to deal specifically with the needs of agriculture. It covers the incredible richness of diversity hidden within the genes of the thousand of different varieties of crops that feed humanity. The Treaty will make it easier for farmers and breeders to continue sharing those resources so that they can meet new challenges in the future.



The Treaty was adopted by the FAO Conference on 3 November 2001. As of September 2006, 104 States and the European Community are Parties to it. The Governing Body of the Treaty, composed of all Contracting Parties, adopted in its first meeting (Madrid, June 2006) the main instruments of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit Sharing.



OBJECTIVES OF THE TREATY

- The conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture
- The fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for sustainable agriculture and food security

How will the Generation Challenge Programme benefit from the Treaty?

The Treaty will facilitate access to plant genetic resources crucial for research and plant breeding. Certainty, transparency and standardized practices in the transfer of material will lead to increased and improved flows of material. The Treaty will foster the exchange of information and technology concerning conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.



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THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM OF ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING

WHY A MULTILATERAL APPROACH?

Special nature of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA):

- Include man-made biodiversity
- Agricultural genetic resources have always been exchanged not only among farmers but also across the globe
- All countries are dependant on each other for PGRFA originated elsewhere

Consequently, there is a need for:

- **Continued exchange of PGRFA** and access to PGRFA in centres of origin and diversity
- **Easy access** to reduce transaction costs
- Easy, efficient and **equitable system of benefit sharing**

WHAT DOES THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM COVER?

- PGRFA established according to criteria of food security and interdependence, listed in **Annex 1** of the Treaty and under the management and control of the Contracting Parties and in the public domain
- **Designated materials held in trust** in the *ex situ* collections of the International Agricultural Research Centres

FACILITATED ACCESS RULES through the STANDARD MATERIAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT (SMTA)

- There is **no individual owner** with whom individual contracts for access and benefit sharing must be negotiated. This **lowers transaction costs** to benefit farmers, plant breeders and researchers and ultimately consumers
- **No requirement for tracking of individual accessions**
- Recipients must continue to make the **materials received available** to the Multilateral System using the SMTA
- **Click wrap/shrink wrap acceptance** options
- **“Intellectual property** or other rights that limit facilitated access to the PGRFA, or their genetic parts and components, in the form received from the Multilateral System” may not be claimed
- Access to **PGRFA under development**, including material being developed by farmers, shall be at the discretion of its developer

BENEFIT SHARING

Sharing monetary benefits:

- If a product that incorporates material from the Multilateral System is **commercialized** in a way that restricts others from further research and breeding, a **mandatory payment will be made** to the Multilateral System.
- In the frame of the Treaty’s funding strategy, the **benefits** obtained through these payments **will be used for conservation and sustainable use**

Sharing non monetary benefits:

- **Facilitated access to genetic material** is itself a major benefit
- **Exchange of information on PGRFA**
- **Access to and transfer of technology**: exchange of genetic material under the Multilateral System, crop-based thematic groups, partnership in research and development, human resource development
- **Capacity building**