



## **Genebanks for climate resilience: Policy tools for plant genetic resources conservation and national climate adaptation**

**Organizers:** FAO Secretariat of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (FAO International Treaty), the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust), and the UN Climate Change secretariat and its Regional Collaboration Center for Asia and the Pacific (UNFCCC RCC Asia-Pacific)

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**Objective:** Provide a three-day learning workshop on international policy and legal instruments and implementation tools for crop diversity management, in support of national food security and climate change adaptation and resilience.

**Duration & Location:** 19-21 June 2024, Sukosol Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand.

**Outreach:** The invited participants are from the following nine (9) countries: Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yemen.

**Participants:** Around 20 participants (2 per country: genebank manager, biodiversity/climate change official)

**Expected Outputs:** Genebank managers and institution heads from partner countries trained on: policy aspects related to plant genetic resources conservation; national programming and budgeting; and alignment with initiatives on biodiversity and climate adaptation plans.

**Expected Outcomes:** Participants apply new knowledge and skills to support national plant genetic resources programs in their respective countries for the effective conservation and utilization of crop diversity, contributing to food security, biodiversity management, and climate change adaptation.

**Modes of learning:** Presentations, Q&A, group exercises, mutual sharing of experiences

**Language:** English

**Funding Sources:** The costs for the meeting venue, travel, accommodation, and meals of workshop participants will be covered by the Crop Trust and the FAO International Treaty through the BOLD Project. UNFCCC will provide technical backstopping on linkages to policies on climate change adaptation and will provide local logistics support through its RCC for Asia-Pacific.

**Tentative Program (as of 10 May 2024)**

Day 1	Session1	Introduction, welcome The FAO International Treaty, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, and the BOLD Project The genetic resource policy landscape (history, development, evolution), overview of the International Treaty
	Session2	Access and benefit-sharing: the Multilateral System of the FAO International Treaty (MLS), the interface with the Nagoya Protocol ABS policy evolutions Group exercise 1
	Session 3	Country presentations (guided by template and questions)
Day 2	Session 4	Adding materials in the MLS: What and How Group exercise 2
	Session 5	The Funding Strategy of the International Treaty: PGRFA integration into national planning and NBSAPs
	Session 6	Country-intensives (themes: ratification, germplasm acquisition, and distribution, national planning, and budgets)
Day 3	Session 7	Linking genebanks with adaptation planning and implementation
	Session 8	Group exercise 3
	Session 9	Wrap-up, feedback, closing program

**Background**

The project Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD), funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, aims to ensure and expand the availability of key national crop collections, and promote their use by researchers, pre-breeders, and farmers for climate change adaptation in a number of partner developing countries. BOLD contributes to implementing provisions of the FAO International Treaty related to conservation, sustainable use, and sharing of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), and contributes to the achievement of SDG Target 2.5, which recognizes the maintenance of crop diversity through soundly managed and diversified genebanks at national, regional and international levels as essential to end hunger and malnutrition.

Among its outputs, BOLD targets the strengthening of human capacity in genebanks to operate effectively and efficiently, including through the training of staff of country institutions in policy matters as they pertain to compliance with the FAO International Treaty and other relevant international legal instruments.

**Rationale and justification of the workshop**

Since the entry into force of the FAO International Treaty in 2004, the need for capacity development for national implementation has been increasingly expressed by Contracting Parties and stakeholder groups.



International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture



The translation of its provisions into effective measures and practices at the national level is critical for the full implementation of the Treaty's objectives.

Genebanks are at the forefront of International Treaty operations, especially regarding the exchange of germplasm under the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-Sharing (MLS), and key stakeholders in implementation. National genebanks practically function within national legal and institutional frameworks of access and benefit-sharing where the Treaty rules and institutions interact with other rules, practices, and institutions revolving around the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol, both domestically and in countries of partner institutions. Despite the Treaty and the CBD being declared as mutually supportive, the coexistence of different rules and institutions creates complexity at both international and national levels. Hence, genebanks need to reinforce their skills to be able to navigate such complexity and maintain their essential functions, with a clear understanding of the policy and legal frameworks and the ability to draw procedures and practices that facilitate Treaty-based operations of acquisition and distribution.

The International Treaty's Funding Strategy 2020-2027 has a target of approximately US\$1 billion per year. It aims to ensure that sufficient financial resources for the Treaty implementation are mobilized through a range of channels in a long-term, coordinated, and effective way, including at the national level, where Treaty implementation is key. A key approach envisaged to achieve the Funding Strategy target is to enhance the integration of PGRFA in national development plans, budgets, and priorities for donor support and external funding.

The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) in December 2022, constitutes a significant milestone in addressing the global biodiversity crisis. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are the main instruments for the implementation of the CBD and, therefore, of the KM-GBF. Parties to the CBD are currently revising and updating their NBSAPs, which provides an opportunity to mainstream the implementation of the ITPGRFA within the revised NBSAPs and other relevant policies, plans, and programs to recognize the contribution of the conservation and sustainable use of PGRFA to the achievement of the goals and targets of the KM-GBF.

Additionally, genebanks have an essential role in climate adaptation and can serve as an essential pillar for sustainable agriculture and food security in the face of climate change. They are central to national efforts in climate-resilient food systems. By preserving a wide array of genetic materials, genebanks can serve as repositories that can provide the genetic traits necessary for crop varieties needed in the face of changing climate conditions, pests, and diseases. With this backdrop, there is an opportunity for genebanks to be recognized in the national adaptation plans (NAPs) as a critical solution for food system resilience in the face of climate shocks and stresses. By integrating genebanks into these plans, countries can ensure that their food and agricultural strategies are underpinned by a strong foundation of genetic diversity and resource availability.

The collaboration with UNFCCC RCC presents a strategic opportunity to align the objectives of the FAO Treaty with broader climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. RCCs, with their regional focus and expertise, can facilitate the integration of genebank initiatives into regional and national climate strategies, ensuring that these efforts are coherent and mutually reinforcing.