



Invitation to the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on
Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Rome, Italy, 18 – 20 September 2024

Reply requested by 31 July 2024

The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the honour to extend an invitation to attend the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Working Group) which will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 18 to 20 September 2024. The meeting will open on Wednesday, 18 September 2024 at 10:00 (CEST).

The Session is being convened at the request of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA, hereinafter referred to as "Commission"), which established the Working Group at its Fifteenth Regular Session in January 2015. The Statutes of the Working Group are available on the Commission's website at: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i8945en>.

The Provisional Agenda is attached herewith. All other meeting and background documents may be downloaded, as they become available, from the website of the Working Group: <https://www.fao.org/aquatic-genetic-resources/activities/itwg/en/>

The Session is being convened under the Regular Programme of the Organization and will be held in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The Fifth Session of the Working Group will be preceded by an informal technical dialogue on 17 September 2024, which will focus on the new FAO Aquatic Genetic Resources Information System (AquaGRIS). Further information on the informal technical dialogue will be made available in advance via the website of the Working Group (see above).

The Members of the Working Group and their Alternates, as elected by the Nineteenth Regular Session of the Commission in July 2023, are as follows:

- Africa: Cameroon, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan
First Alternate: Mozambique
Second Alternate: Côte d'Ivoire
- Asia: India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea
First Alternate: Sri Lanka
Second Alternate: Bangladesh
- Europe: Czechia, Finland, Italy, Norway, Spain
First Alternate: Germany
Second Alternate: Russian Federation
- Latin America and the Caribbean: Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador
First Alternate: Jamaica
Second Alternate: Colombia
- Near East: Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
First Alternate: Iraq
Second Alternate: Libya
- North America: United States of America, Canada
- Southwest Pacific: Fiji, Palau
First Alternate: Tonga
Second Alternate: Marshall Islands

According to the Statutes of the Working Group, Alternates replace, in the order in which they appear on the above list, any Member who has resigned and informed the Secretariat accordingly. Members are requested to confirm to the Secretariat in writing their participation or non-participation in the Working Group meeting. If a Member of the Working Group is not able to attend the meeting, and informs the Secretariat accordingly, the Member shall be replaced in a timely manner by one of the elected Alternates from the same region. In case a Member of the Working Group does not attend the meeting without having informed the Secretariat prior to the meeting, the Working Group, in consultation with the region, may replace this Member, on an ad-hoc basis, by a Member of the Commission from the same region that is present at the meeting.

Members of the Commission that are not Members of the Working Group may participate, upon request to the Commission Secretariat, in the work of the Working Group in an observer capacity. The Working Group, or the Bureau on behalf of the Working Group, may invite experts, as well as representatives of specialized international organizations, to attend its meetings as observers.

As requested by the Commission, the Working Group will review the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation, Sustainable Use and Development of Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Global Plan of Action), including: the further development and utilization of AquaGRIS and draft guidelines on genetic management in stocking programmes and *ex situ in vitro* gene banking of aquatic species. The Working Group will further consider indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Global Plan of Action and the preparation of *The Second Report on the State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The Commission further requested the Working Group to consider cross-sectoral matters, such as the role of genetic resources for food and agriculture in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and options for a procedure for the ad-hoc identification of new and emerging issues for inclusion into the Commission's Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW).

Members of the Commission and Members and Associate Members that are not Members of the Commission are kindly invited to inform the Director-General, by 31 July 2024, of the names, official titles, addresses and email accounts of representatives designated to participate in the Fifth Session. Online registration for participation in-person, at FAO headquarters, requires the uploading of a recent passport-size digital photograph. Online registration for countries is available through the password-protected area of the FAO Members' Gateway at:

<http://www.fao.org/members-gateway/en/>.

Representatives from international organizations designated to attend the meeting as observers are requested to forward their names, official titles and addresses by email to: ITWG-AQGR@fao.org, together with a recent passport-size digital photograph.

Before travelling, participants should check visa requirements with the competent Italian Consulate. Kindly note that visas can be requested in the country of origin (country in which the participant holds citizenship) or in the country of residence (country in which the participant resides at the time of visa application). Participants who do not have an Italian Consulate in their country may apply at the correspondent Italian Consulate in a neighbouring country, or at any other Consulate which belongs to a Schengen or European country. Visa applications should be submitted to the Italian Consulate one month before arrival in Italy. It is the responsibility of participants to request their visa applications personally, arrange for an appointment and present all the necessary documentation to the Italian Consulate. Participants who do not need an entry visa to enter Italy should ensure that their passports are valid for at least six months after the intended date of departure from the Schengen area. In these cases, upon entering Italy, border authorities may require participants to show evidence for the reason and the duration of their stay in Italy. Participants with non-direct flights to Rome, Italy, should check whether a transit visa is necessary to enter the transit area of international airports.