



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



International Treaty  
on Plant Genetic Resources  
for Food and Agriculture

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a single wheat spike against a clear blue sky. The hand is positioned at the bottom, with the thumb and index finger gripping the base of the spike. The wheat spike is golden-brown and has long, thin awns extending outwards. A semi-transparent brown rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

Sharing the  
benefits of plant  
genetic diversity:  
**the Benefit-  
sharing Fund**

# The Benefit Sharing Fund



Plant genetic diversity is essential for food security, including to diversify our diets and adapt our crops to climate change. The future of agriculture depends on international cooperation for the conservation, exchange and use of a wide range of crops and their genetic resources.

**The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** is the FAO legally-binding agreement that brings together governments to meet these challenges.

**The Benefit-sharing Fund** of the International Treaty enables small-scale farmers to access a wide range of plant genetic resources that are adapted to their needs. As a result, farmers grow different types of crops and plant varieties that taste better and are more nutritious. The Fund promotes a more sustainable farming for farmers and the planet.

**Constance Masotcha** is a lead farmer in the Murehwa District of Zimbabwe. She participated in a multi-country project implemented in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Together with other farmers in her community, Constance worked with scientists and extension services to test varieties of sorghum and millet. They selected crop varieties that can be grown under more erratic climate conditions, which have become increasingly frequent in recent years. Thanks to the Benefit-sharing Fund project, communities in the three countries can access genetic material from national genebanks and from breeders of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) based in India, and further test and adapt these to local conditions.



So far, the Benefit-sharing Fund has benefited more than **1 million people**, most of them small-scale farmers like Constance, through **80 projects in 67 developing countries worldwide.**



Constance  
Masotcha



**170**  
LOCAL SEED  
RESERVOIRS



**20 000**  
OF ACCESSIONS  
CONTRIBUTED TO  
THE MULTILATERAL  
SYSTEM



**31 000**  
PLANT GENETIC MATERIALS  
TESTED BY FARMERS



**100 000**  
PEOPLE WORKING WITH  
PGRFA TRAINED



**400**  
CLIMATE RESILIENT  
CROP VARIETIES  
DEVELOPED

**1.**

Managing and improving  
adapted plant genetic  
resources with farmers'  
participation

**2.**

Enhancing local seed value  
chains to improve the  
production and consumption  
of adapted plant genetic  
resources

**3.**

Strengthening mechanisms  
to enhance the sharing of  
data and knowledge on  
innovations for management  
of plant genetic resources.

# Programmatic approach

Over the past decade, the Benefit-sharing Fund evolved towards a programmatic approach and more strategic, sustainable and diversified implementation of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty. In 2019, The Governing Body of the International Treaty adopted the Operations Manual for the Fund in its Funding Strategy. The Operations Manual paves the way for the Fund to be flexible and responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries.

## Resource mobilization

The goal of the Funding Strategy is to further diversify funding sources and mobilize financial resources from public and private sectors, including through the Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing. Long-term partnerships with donors are pursued to ensure predictable and long-term funding. Likewise, resource mobilization activities are broadened in scope and focus on innovative mechanisms, including by engaging new actors, such as the food processing industry. Donor recognition and visibility are important features of the Fund's new programmatic approach, providing an opportunity to maximize donor involvement and help attract new resources and partners.

## Knowledge Management and Visibility

An online Community of Practice will bring together the Fund's partners to share and

disseminate information, best practices and lessons learnt between projects and programmes in an interactive manner. The partners are expected to communicate benefits and results arising in areas such as economic development, sustainable agriculture, food security, climate change, biodiversity conservation and resilient livelihoods.

## Improved monitoring, evaluation and learning

A new Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Framework (MEL Framework) was finalized by the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization in 2021. The Framework promotes accountability and effectiveness and efficiency in delivery and enables impact assessment. It addresses the monitoring, evaluation and reporting in an integrated manner, including by further strengthening the learning and knowledge management.

Furthermore, the MEL Framework:

- Defines a Results Framework monitoring indicators for all projects
- Presents new approaches to risk management
- Enables gender-differentiated monitoring at output level
- Guides baseline information gathering, as crucial basis for an evidence based, results-oriented and effective MEL system



# Emel Ozer



Women are leaders in research and innovation conducted through the Benefit-sharing Fund. **More than 5 000 students, both MSc and PhD,** have been trained through the **projects supported by the Fund.**

**Emel Ozer** is a Turkish researcher involved in a multi-country project supported by the Fund in the Near East. Emel received a national award from the Turkish government for her achievements in research and development on wheat and climate change.

Training and building capacities of young researchers in developing countries is essential for ensuring long-term implementation of the International Treaty.

# Improving livelihoods

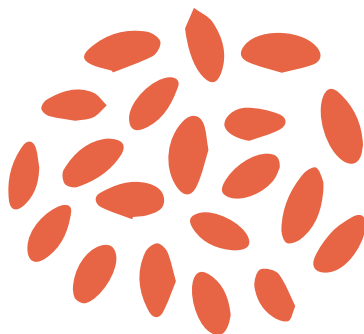
The Benefit-sharing Fund aims to improve livelihoods of small-scale farmers in developing countries, and to promote food security and sustainable agriculture through the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. To work towards this outcome, projects focus on conservation and sustainable use of crop diversity, strengthening local seed value chains and on the exchange of plant genetic resources, data and knowledge.

## **A unique mechanism**

The Benefit-sharing Fund receives voluntary contributions from a wide range of sources. It is an essential element of the Treaty's Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing. The Multilateral System is the largest system for exchange of plant genetic material for food and agriculture around the world, which requires its users to provide monetary benefit-sharing back to the Fund, under certain conditions. The Governing Body has established the Fund as the mechanism for receiving and utilizing the financial resources that accrue from the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of the International Treaty.

## **Strong partnerships**

The Benefit-sharing Fund strengthens collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders. To date, the Fund has established partnerships with over 500 institutions, including farmers' organizations, national and international research institutes, non-governmental organizations, universities, extension services, institutes for biodiversity conservation, genebanks, governments and the private sector. The Fund is demand-driven and responsive to the different needs and interests of farmers and other providers and users of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.



## Contact

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