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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP TO ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM

Lima, Peru, 7–11 July 2025

Benefit-sharing Fund: recent trends

Note by the Secretary

At its thirteenth meeting, the Working Group agreed that a number of information documents would be prepared for this meeting, and that additional data on the Funding Strategy and the Benefit-sharing Fund would be made available. Information about the Funding Strategy and its target is available on the International Treaty's webpage dedicated to the Funding Strategy (www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/funding/en/).

This document contains additional data on the Benefit-sharing Fund as recently provided to the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (Funding Committee) at its eleventh meeting. At its tenth meeting, the Funding Committee had requested the Secretariat to compile information describing recent trends on aspects of the Benefit-sharing Fund to inform its discussions on the Benefit-sharing Fund target at its eleventh meeting.

I. BENEFIT-SHARING FUND: RECENT TRENDS

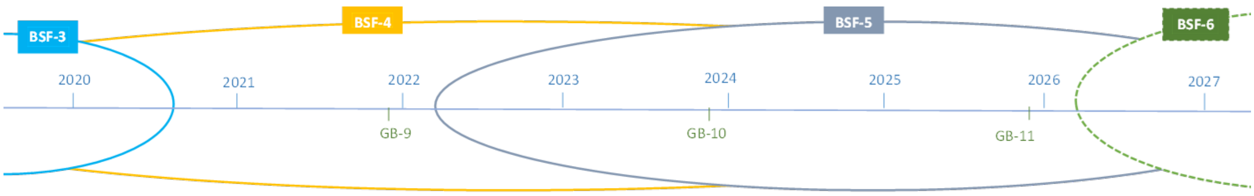
a. BSF project cycles: length and funding

1. For the purpose of determining "recent trends" related to the length and funding of the project cycles of the Benefit-sharing Fund, the latest three project cycles (BSF-3,4 and 5) have been considered.

2. The funding levels per cycle for BSF-3, 4 and 5 have ranged between USD 6 751 735 and USD 10 078 580, representing an average of USD 8 703 173. Funding levels are based upon the total funds available for each project cycle, which in addition to grants to BSF partners, include other funds required to implement the cycle such as for monitoring and evaluation, helpdesk and program workshops, communication and visibility and FAO support costs and technical support services.

3. Project cycles generally commence with the launch of a Call for Proposals and conclude with the finalisation of the report of the independent evaluation. Project implementation within a project cycle is usually between 2 and 4 years.[1] The project cycles often overlap as shown in the figure below. Calls for Proposals for BSF-3,4 and 5 were issued in 2014, 2017 and 2022 respectively.

Figure 1: **RECENT CYCLES OF THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND OVER THE FUNDING STRATEGY PERIOD**

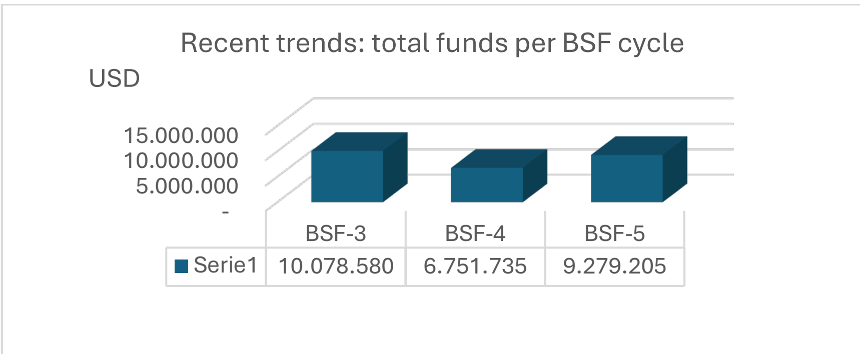


4. The length of the individual project cycles for BSF-3 and BSF-5 is 6 years. BSF-4, which ran over a period of 9 years, was an exceptional case due to the disruption and consequential delays caused by COVID-19.

5. The funding levels and length per project cycle are set out below:

   a. **BSF-3:** The total funding available was USD 10 078 580.[2] The project cycle commenced in 2014 and concluded in 2020 (6 years).
   b. **BSF-4:** The total available funding was USD 6 751 735.[3] The project cycle commenced in 2017 and is expected to conclude in 2026 (9 years).
   c. **BSF-5:** the total available funding was USD 9 279 205.[4] The project cycle commenced in 2022 and is expected to conclude in 2028 (6 years).

Figure 2. **RECENT TRENDS: TOTAL FUNDS PER BSF CYCLE (BSF-3-5)**



[1] The projects approved under BSF project cycles 3,4 and 5 have been between 24 and 48 months
[2] As reported in *Table 2: Evolution of the BSF - major changes* contained in the Evaluation of the third project cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund of the International Treaty on the Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
[3] As contained in the document *Fourth Call for Proposals Methodology for selection of projects by the Bureau* provided to the Bureau of the Seventh Session of the Governing Body in advance of the teleconference held on Thursday, 28 June 2018
[4] As reported in *Table 1: Indicative BSF-5 budget* contained in the document *IT/GB-9/SFC-5/22/4* The Fifth Cycle of the Benefit-sharing Fund

b. Contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund

6. Contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund to date have derived from the following main sources:

a. MLS user-based income (2.2%)
b. Voluntary contributions from Contracting Parties (90%)
c. Private sector (3.8%)
d. International mechanisms and funds (4.07%)
e. Non-Government Organisations and others (.004%)
f. Innovative initiatives from international Treaty stakeholders (.02%)

7. The below table shows a detailed breakdown of the funding sources and amounts received, under each of the above categories from the inception of the Benefit-sharing Fund to date.

Table 1. **CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND (INCEPTION TO 16 MAY 2025)**

TABLE 1: **CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BENEFIT-SHARING FUND**

MLS USER-BASED INCOME	**USD**	**%**
Canadian seed company	3,187	
Nunhems Netherlands BV	732,301	
Bejo Zaden BV	88,135	
Uniquest Pty Ltd	218	
Zollinger Bio	355	
NuCicer	484	
Subtotal	**824,680**	**2.2%**
VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS		
CONTRACTING PARTIES		
Australia	1,588,815	
Austria	24,176	
Germany	587,896	
European Commission	5,565,907	
Indonesia	100,000	
Ireland	659,800	
Italy	10,208,822	
Norway	11,567,159	
Spain	2,348,935	
Sweden	244,903	
Switzerland	222,461	
Subtotal	**33,118,873**	**90%**
PRIVATE SECTOR		
European Seed Association	339,751	
SEMAE	988,534	
Federation of Seed Industry of India	24,364	
International Seed Federation	49,280	
Subtotal	**1,401,929**	**3.8%**
INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS AND FUNDS		
IFAD	1,500,000	
Subtotal	**1,500,000**	**4.07%**
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHERS		
ProSpecieRara Hauptsitz	1,536	
Subtotal	**1,536**	**0.004%**
INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL TREATY STAKEHOLDERS		
Seed trade licencing platform	6,416	
Subtotal	**6,416**	**0.02%**
GRAND TOTAL	**36,853,434**	**100%**

Notes:

- *The amounts shown in the table above only reflect the income received into the accounts of the Benefit-sharing Fund. They do not include tranches of funds that may have been committed to the BSF by Contracting Parties (Voluntary Contributions) through signed funding and other agreements, yet to be paid.*
- *The annual contributions derived from seed sales received by Norway's Ministry of Agriculture are categorised as "Voluntary Contributions from Contracting Parties" in the above table. It is expected in future analyses that such contributions are disaggregated further and those deriving from seed sales presented under "Innovative Initiatives". Given the amounts received deriving from seed sales in Norway are very small relative to the overall contributions received by Contracting Parties, it has minimal effect on the % share by segment.*

8. The data in Table 2 indicates that Voluntary Contributions from Contracting Parties have been the primary source of funding to the BSF. Since residual funds from previous project cycles are frequently carried over into subsequent cycles, it is difficult to present an accurate breakdown of the funding sources by individual project cycle. However, overall, the trend has consistently shown that Voluntary Contributions from Contracting Parties remain the predominant source of funding to all project cycles.

c. Other relevant trends to take into account

9. The global funding landscape has changed dramatically since the last meeting of the Funding Committee in November 2024, with notable contractions and shifting strategies in institutional and development aid.

10. Past trends related to complementary funding streams such as the World Bank, IFAD, and others may need to be reconsidered. Given this context and the limited data available specific to funding flows supporting local seed value chains and on-farm management of PGRFA, the Committee may wish to undertake an in-depth analysis, including examining future trends, at a later point in time.

11. Broadly, multilateral development banks (MDBs), such as the World Bank, and development finance institutions (DFIs), like IFAD, are expected to remain a crucial but complex source of funding, offering potential to further explore and leverage. MDBs disburse billions of dollars annually but organizations need to engage early, reviewing procurement pipelines and building relationships both at the institution and at the government levels. DFIs are often seeking sectoral expertise and local insights in the markets they plan to expand to, presenting opportunities for organizations to position themselves as partners in pipeline development, technical assistance delivery, or environmental, social, and governance, or ESG, strengthening.[5]

12. Additionally, there is increased potential for further private sector contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund. At its thirteenth meeting, the Working Group emphasized the importance of diversifying the sources to contribute to the BSF target, beyond user-based income. It noted the importance of reaching out to seed industry and the food processing industry and to increase awareness of the Benefit-sharing Fund.[6]

13. To incentive the seed industry to continue and upscale their contributions, further efforts could be made to draw attention to the contributions being made to the Benefit-sharing Fund. Furthermore, the implementation of the Food Processing Engagement Strategy, approved by the Governing Body at its Ninth Session, offers the tools and impetus to increase engagement with the Food Processing Industry with a view to securing contributions to the BSF in the future.

14. The Committee may wish to note that while the table of contributions to the Benefit-sharing Fund above indicates that the private sector is close to being the equal second largest donor segment to the BSF, no contribution has been received from this segment in the current biennium (2023-2025).

[5] See, for instance, Devex, What's next for global development funding in 2025 | Devex
[6] Paragraph 7, OWG-EFMLS-13 Report