



United States Department of Agriculture

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Research, Education, and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

**Beginning on or about January 1, 2024, the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) will distribute all germplasm to international requestors (outside the U.S. states and territories) with the [Standard Material Transfer Agreement](#) of the [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#).**

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. *What is changing?*

Distributing all NPGS accessions of all taxa with the SMTA to international requestors is a new procedure.

2. *How will I accept the terms of the SMTA for material I am requesting?*

There is a click-acceptance of the terms of the SMTA as part of the website shopping-cart checkout process. This has already been the procedure for several years when SMTA acceptance was required. The only change is that SMTA acceptance will now be required for all distributions to locations outside the U.S.

3. *Does this new procedure required accepting the SMTA for distributions in the U.S.?*

NPGS material shipped to U.S. state and territorial locations will require SMTA acceptance only for accessions that the NPGS acquired with the SMTA. This is not new and has been the procedure for several years.

4. *Does this new procedure apply to all taxa or only Annex 1 crops?*

It applies to all taxa being distributed by the NPGS. There are four non-ARS collaborators that use GRIN-Global to assist in managing their collections: Desert Legume Program at University of Arizona, Tobacco Collection at North Carolina State University, C. M. Rick Tomato Genetic Stocks Collection at the University of California at Davis, and the USDA U.S. Forest Service National Seed Laboratory. There four collections will require SMTA acceptance for distributions outside the U.S. only for material they acquired with the SMTA.

5. *What happens if I do not accept the SMTA when required?*

For international requestors who do not accept the SMTA, your entire request will be cancelled at the shopping cart stage and will not be submitted to the NPGS. For domestic requestors who do not accept the SMTA, any accessions that require SMTA acceptance will be removed from your shopping cart before your request can be submitted.

6. *I am a U.S.-based researcher but want my request shipped to a research site outside the U.S. Will SMTA acceptance be required?*

Yes. The shipping destination alone will determine whether SMTA acceptance is required. Any shipping destination other than U.S. states and territories will require SMTA acceptance.

7. *What are the implications of my accepting the SMTA?*

It is beyond the capacity and scope of the NPGS to answer this question. See the [ITPGRFA site](#), and especially the section on the [SMTA](#) for more information to help answer this question.

8. *Am I authorized to accept the SMTA?*

It is beyond the capacity and scope of the NPGS to answer this question. However, it is important for the requestor to know the answer. You may need to consult with your organizational technology transfer/intellectual property contacts. The NPGS assumes that anyone who accepts the SMTA has determined that they are authorized to do so, especially for requestors from universities and research companies.