



Beginning on or about January 1, 2025, the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) will modify its [SMTA](#) acceptance policy to distinguish between propagative and non-propagative germplasm.

Frequently Asked Question added September 2, 2025:

1. *If I receive plant material from the NPGS with the SMTA and further distribute or share it with someone else, is the new recipient obligated to comply with the terms of the SMTA?*
Yes. You do not need to report to the NPGS any subsequent distributions after you receive the material from us. However, you as the provider are responsible for ensuring the SMTA is accepted by the new recipient and reporting that distribution to the [ITPGRFA](#). See the Treaty's [Easy SMTA](#) site for more details.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding January 1, 2025 modifications (see FAQ on all pages for prior information that remains applicable) :

1. *What is changing on January 1, 2025?*
The sole change is that SMTA acceptance will be required for distributions of only **propagative** germplasm to international (outside the U.S. states and territories) requestors. Distributions of **non-propagative** material will no longer require acceptance of the SMTA for either international or domestic (U.S states and territories) orders irrespective of the SMTA status when the NPGS began curating the material. Concisely, the modification is that SMTA acceptance will never be required to receive **non-propagative** germplasm.
2. *How will this change be handled?*
The click acceptance dialogue that is part of the shopping-cart checkout process will apply the SMTA only to accessions that require it, including requests for both **propagative** and **non-propagative** material in the same order.
3. *What happens if I do not accept the SMTA when required?*
Not accepting the SMTA any time it is required will remove those accessions from the shopping cart before the order can be submitted.

4. *What are the propagative and non-propagative forms of germplasm?*

The NPGS defines the following germplasm forms as **propagative**:

Budwood, Bulb, Clump, Corm, Cutting, Ear, Fruit, Grafted seedling, Hybrid seed, In-vitro, Meristem, Pad, Plant, Pollen, Rhizome, Root, Scion, Seed, Seedling, Spore, Stolon, Tissue culture, Tuber, Paternal flowers, Layer, Panicle, Embryonic axes, Bacteria, Virus, Inflorescence, Dormant bud, Associated plant, Mini tubers, Somatic embryo, Fungus, Crown.

The NPGS defines the following germplasm forms as **non-propagative**:

Cane, DNA sample, Herbarium specimen, Information only, Leaves, Maternal flowers, Primers, RNA Sample, Entire female Inflorescence.

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 \(SMTA\)](#) of the [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture \(ITPGRFA\)](#).

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *What is changing?*
The distribution of all NPGS accessions of all taxa will require acceptance of the SMTA by all international (non-U.S.) requestors.
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 require accepting the SMTA for distributions within the U.S.?*
NPGS material shipped to U.S. state and territorial addresses 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. These 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?*
The answer to this question was revised based on modifications the NPGS made to its distribution policy on January 1, 2025. Please see the new answer in the preceding FAQ section.
6. *I am a U.S.-based researcher but want my order 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 should 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 & development companies.