

Minutes of the 25th Meeting of the Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

28 March 2022

The Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust ('Crop Trust') met on 28 March 2022 via online video conference, hosted by the Crop Trust Secretariat in Bonn, Germany. The meeting was chaired by the Republic of Korea. The meeting was attended by representatives of donors, multilateral partners, and members of the Crop Trust Secretariat. A list of those in attendance can be found in Annex 1. Annex 2 shows the meeting agenda. Several background documents were circulated to invitees prior to the meeting.

1. Welcome and Round of Introductions

The Chair of the Donors' Council, Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, opened the meeting and extended a warm welcome to all participants. The Chair commenced a brief round of introductions for participating Donors' Council members.

2. Words of Welcome from the new Chair of the Crop Trust Executive Board

The newly appointed Chair of the Crop Trust Executive Board, Ms. Catherine Bertini, took the floor to introduce herself to the members of the Donors' Council. The Chair expressed her appreciation for the donors of the Crop Trust and her eagerness to work closely with the donor community in her role as Chair.

3. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda of the 25th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council was adopted by the Donors' Council members. The Minutes of the 24th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council held on 7 October 2021 were approved.

4. Oral Update by the Executive Director on recent development and events

The Executive Director, Mr. Stefan Schmitz, began his remarks by mentioning that the ongoing war in Ukraine remains at the forefront of the attention of everyone at the Crop Trust. The Executive Director informed Donors' Council members that only part of the Ukrainian genebank collection are safety duplicated in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. On this note, the Executive

Director emphasized the need for genebanks to safely duplicate and store seeds at two levels, including in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, in case of unforeseen disasters. The war in Ukraine may lead to a significant increase in hunger and malnutrition in some parts of the world, and while there are many efforts that must be made to avoid this, the work of the Crop Trust continues to contribute to more sustainable and resilient food systems.

The Executive Director then explained that the Crop Trust has three goals: 1) long-term support for maintenance of essential genebank operations; 2) time-bound support for upgrading and empowering genebanks; and 3) a higher political profile for the issue of crop diversity conservation and use. The Executive Director provided a brief overview of the financial mechanisms that make these goals possible, which includes the endowment fund and project funds. The Executive Director emphasized that support from the endowment currently focuses on international genebanks, while national genebanks are the major partners in Crop Trust projects.

Furthermore, the Crop Trust continues to have a fruitful and cooperative dialogue with CGIAR, and recently held a discussion at the CGIAR Systems Council Meeting to agree on concrete steps regarding future cooperation.

The Executive Director informed the Donors' Council of four strategies under development to ensure that financial and programmatic goals are achieved:

1. Financing Strategy
2. Investment and ESG Strategy
3. Genebank Support Strategy
4. Communications Strategy

The Executive Director explained that these strategies underpin the overarching Crop Trust 2030 Strategy which the Crop Trust hopes to complete by the end of 2022.

Germany inquired what degree of detail will be included in the Crop Trust 2030 strategy. The Executive Director explained that the Financing Strategy will map out plans for the future of the Crop Trust's resource mobilization efforts in broad terms, but especially as it relates to fundraising from different types of donors. It will also speak to how innovative finance can complement traditional funding streams. The recommendations presented by CCS Fundraising will be considered in the development of the Financing Strategy. The Investment and ESG Strategy will position the Crop Trust with regards to the global ESG agenda, and discuss risks and opportunities of different types of investment strategies.

The Genebank Support Strategy will outline the Crop Trust's future support, both financial and technical, to international genebanks (collections included in Article 15 of the Plant Treaty), as well as regional and national genebanks. The Communications Strategy will outline the ways in

which the Crop Trust can raise the political profile and importance of ‘crop diversity’ as a key issue on the global climate change, biodiversity conservation and food security policy agendas.

The United States of America inquired from the perspective of a CGIAR donor what more could be done to strengthen the global system of ex situ conservation of crop diversity. The Executive Director explained that the sooner the Crop Trust is able to endow the essential operations of all key international genebanks, the sooner research institutes of the CGIAR and others can fully focus on the research needed to ensure a sustainable and resilient food system. The Executive Director emphasized that the Crop Trust and the CGIAR are working towards the same goals, and funding both the CGIAR and the Crop Trust are complementary and necessary investments.

The Chair of the Executive Board informed Donors’ Council members that the Crop Trust Executive Board and CGIAR leadership will have a Board session focused solely on cooperation between Crop Trust and CGIAR in the upcoming fall meeting in order to build more synergies between the two organizations.

5. Resource Mobilization: Key recommendations for a new financing strategy for the Crop Trust

Mr. Charlie Michaud, Principal and Managing Director of CCS Fundraising, opened the agenda item and introduced CCS Fundraising (CCS), a consulting firm and management company working in the non-profit space for over 75 years. Over the course of five months, CCS worked with the Crop Trust to assess the Crop Trust’s current fundraising goals and methods and to develop key recommendations for future resource mobilization efforts.

Mr. Michaud presented eight findings from discussions held with a variety of stakeholders, including governments, UN Agencies, corporations and foundations, strategic partners, and an ad hoc planning committee established by the Crop Trust and CCS. These findings are as follows:

1. Strengths and opportunities

The Crop Trust is perceived positively among peers and stakeholders. Additionally, the Crop Trust is valued for its expertise, knowledge, proven financial model, global mission and co-management of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. However, there are also several opportunities to strengthen donor outreach and stewardship by improving donor communications and more precisely articulating financial needs.

2. Messaging

The Crop Trust should communicate its fundraising goals in a compelling manner and position itself more strongly as a contributor to global solutions. In addition, the Crop Trust should communicate the direct and indirect impact of its work through effective examples and imagery.

3. Funding priorities

The Crop Trust should continue to emphasize the importance of the endowment, as well as the founding purpose of the Crop Trust – to fund a global network of genebanks.

4. Leadership

The Crop Trust should grow its strategic partnerships and expand its network to continue to engage key partners and prospective donors.

5. Financial goal

The financial target appears realistic but should be articulated better.

6. Sources of funding

The study highlights the continued significance of governments as the most important donors; however, there may be some opportunities to diversify funding sources (e.g. foundations, corporations and innovative finance instruments).

7. Innovative finance

Innovative finance should play a complementary and supporting role to more traditional fundraising efforts.

8. Planning of resource mobilization

Now is an opportune moment to obtain additional funding as there is confidence in the Crop Trust's leadership and the issue of biodiversity is increasingly prevalent on the global agenda.

Mr. Michaud then presented a series of key recommendations based on the findings obtained in the surveys. The recommendations are split between strategic and tactical below.

Strategic recommendations:

- Recapture the urgency and importance of mission and purpose
- Establish a Global Leadership Taskforce to intensify meaningful engagement and supporters
- Pursue philanthropy and innovative finance to better position the Crop Trust for sustainability, but anticipate majority of funding from traditional funders
- Launch campaign, in two phases, with the goal of raising another USD 500 million by 2030

Tactical recommendations (for consideration):

- Commit to enhancing donor stewardship and exposure to crucial networks of global funders
- Move quickly into a strong, consistent pattern of interaction with funders
- Increase capacity for resource mobilization relative to financial opportunities

Following Mr. Michaud's presentation, Norway asked for clarification regarding the proposed Global Leadership Taskforce. Mr. Michaud explained that the Global Leadership Taskforce is

envisioned as having 5-7 individuals who join on a voluntary basis. Mr. Michaud noted that CCS is developing specific recommendations on how to approach different types of donors and partners, as well as concrete suggestions for what type of profile members of the Global Leadership Taskforce ideally would have.

Australia acknowledged CCS's recommendations around messaging, and agreed that as a donor Australia focuses on the importance of conserving crop diversity for the sake of issues such as livelihoods and climate change adaptation. On this note, Australia inquired what type of narrative resonates with foundations or philanthropists. Mr. Michaud explained that similar messaging resonates with the philanthropic sector. The Crop Trust should focus on a narrative that highlights the impacts of the work being done by partners, made possible with Crop Trust financial support.

In response to an inquiry from Donors' Council members regarding the Crop Trust's prioritization of support to international versus national genebanks, the Executive Director reminded Donors' Council members that the Crop Trust's Constitution mandates the Crop Trust's support to both international and national genebanks, and simultaneously tasks the Crop Trust with finding the appropriate balance between supporting international and national collections.

Donors' Council members inquired whether global events, such as the war in Ukraine, would prohibit the Crop Trust from reaching the proposed fundraising targets. Mr. Michaud believes that with updated messaging and strengthened efforts to connect the Crop Trust's mission with people during times of crisis, the Crop Trust is in a good position to implement a strong fundraising campaign.

6. Update on the Crop Trust's work on Capacity Building

Ms. Janny van Beem, Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator, provided an update on the Crop Trust's work on capacity building, which included topics such as the benefits of a tailored quality management system (QMS) for capacity development and the Crop Trust's plans for future capacity building initiatives.

The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator briefly explained the steps taken to tailor capacity building development to each partner genebank. KPIs are set for each project and monitored periodically. Additionally, workshops and on-site visits are designed to assist genebanks individually in achieving their goals. The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator outlined the KPIs used to guide capacity development events and investments.

The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator remarked that within the capacity building framework used at the Crop trust the emphasis is on training *everyone* in the genebank, including genebank managers both laboratory and field personnel. Furthermore, the Crop Trust

is increasingly mindful of gender balance and the inclusion of women in capacity building. The Crop Trust also encourages and provides opportunities for trainees to become trainers in their institution, country or region.

The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator defined the Genebank QMS as a tailored QMS that ensures that genebanks meet technical standards and conform with relevant policies. The Genebank QMS can be applied to a variety of crops and conservation methods. Furthermore, the Genebank QMS can contribute to harmonizing conservation methods, data curation and other processes across genebanks. The Genebank Partnerships Coordinator mentioned that there are over 30 international and national genebanks implementing the Genebank QMS.

The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator explained that the genebank standards provided by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are the primary standards used for benchmarking Genebank QMS implementation; however, international, regional and national policies regarding plant genetic resources, as well as new standards, emerging technologies, and upcoming reviews/audits must be taken into account as well. To reach these standards, the Genebank QMS first assesses where a genebank is located on the improvement continuum and then emphasizes eight essential areas that allow staff to plan improvements and monitor progress. The Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator briefly described these eight areas and how they are used in the Genebank QMS framework.

In regards to future plans for capacity building, the Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator highlighted the possibility of joint capacity building activities, such as webinars, workshops and site visits. Additionally, the Crop Trust is working on the development of a Genebank Knowledge Hub – a website that delivers scientifically sound, reliable information regarding genebank procedures and policies.

The Genebank Partnerships Coordinator outlined upcoming capacity building initiatives within the Norwegian-funded BOLD project. These include capacity building on QMS, data harmonization, and training in GRIN-Global Community Edition and Genesys. Additionally, capacity building regarding policy will be conducted in collaboration with the Plant Treaty.

The Genebank Partnerships Coordinator also highlighted capacity building initiatives within the German-funded Seeds for Resilience project. These include in-person workshops followed by on-site visits at each genebank for tailored assistance. Additionally, there will be a continuation of virtual presentations on the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), as well as risk, staff, equipment and information management.

Finally, the Genebank Partnerships Coordinator mentioned the work being done by the Crop Trust IT Group, which includes dozens of capacity building events planned in 2022, as well as global training and harmonization in GRIN-Global Community Edition, Genesys and data harmonization and use of Multi-Crop Passport Descriptors (MCPD).

Following the Genebank Partnerships Coordinator's presentation, Norway inquired whether the Genebank QMS was used to determine whether genebanks are eligible for the Crop Trust's long-term funding. The Genebank Partnerships Coordinator confirmed that QMS is one of the performance indicators used to determine if a genebank is eligible for long-term funding.

Australia inquired whether the Crop Trust had given any thought to more proactive gender and diversity inclusion within capacity building. The Genebank Partnerships Coordinator noted that the Crop Trust is very keen on expanding women's participation in capacity building and has made a proactive effort to send invitations for capacity building training and events specifically to women. Additionally, partner genebanks must report on their gender balance. The Crop Trust is also keen on including individuals who may not have traditional or formal education in capacity building training and events.

Australia also inquired whether genebank standards took into account the management of climate extremes. In response, the Genebank Partnerships Coordinator highlighted training practices that help genebanks evaluate and manage core collections into subsets that represent the greatest amounts of diversity. Once these subsets are identified, they can be readily provided to farmers for use, and provided to researchers to be further evaluated for characteristics able to withstand climate change.

7. Finance and Investment Report

Ms. Dezreen Cameron-Stein, Head of Finance and Investment, presented an overview of the Finance and Investment report, including the Financial Statements from 2021. This provided Donors' Council members with an overview of the activities of the Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) and the Investment Committee (IC) since the Finance & Investment Committee (FIC)'s last report to the Donors' Council in October 2021.

The Head of Finance and Investment opened the presentation by providing an update on the appointment of new members of the FAC and FIC, and noted that Mercer was appointed as the new, single outsourced Chief Investment Officer. The Head of Finance and Investment confirmed that all funds have now transitioned from DWS to Mercer.

The Head of Finance and Investment presented the financial statements and the draft letter of representation to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), which were approved by the Executive Board in March 2022. This is PWC's ninth audit for the Crop Trust and the second one for the new Audit Partner. The Director of Finance outlined that, as per the Executive Board's decision in June 2021, the Crop Trust will tender for the audit in 2022 and that the process will commence shortly.

The Head of Finance and Investment provided details on the Crop Trust's endowment fund investments. The total value of the endowment fund as of 31 December 2021, including the KfW

loan proceeds, amounted to USD 398 million (USD 365 million in December 2020). For the financial year 2021, the performance of the endowment fund was 11.4% (2020: 13.6%) against a policy benchmark return (US inflation plus 4%) of 11.3% over the same period. In 2021, USD 8.8 million was distributed from the endowment fund to the CGIAR Genebank Platform (88%), Crop Trust operations expenses (9%), Svalbard Global Seed Vault (2%), and a long-term grant supporting the South Pacific Community genebank (1%). Since inception, USD 63 million has been withdrawn from the endowment fund to support essential genebank operations.

The EUR Fund, which is composed of the KfW loan and the contributions received to pay the loan interest, also performed positively in 2021, with a 3.5% return on investment against a policy benchmark of 2.8%. Since inception (2017), the EUR Fund made a return of 3.6% against a policy benchmark of 2.8%. Repayment of the KfW loan will start in November 2022.

As coordinator of the Genebank Platform, the Crop Trust is required to provide a Statement of Assurance to the CGIAR to confirm that all obligations have been met and to highlight any financial irregularities. The Executive Board agreed that the Crop Trust would ask the CGIAR centers to provide the same assurance to the Crop Trust before signing. The Crop Trust is currently waiting for responses from the centers. The Executive Board has approved that once all Statements of Assurances have been received from the centers, the Executive Board Chair and Executive Director can sign the Crop Trust's Statement of Assurance 2021 to the CGIAR.

8. Donors' Council Business: Executive Board Appointments upcoming in Fall 2022

The Executive Director informed Donors' Council members that the Executive Board of the Crop Trust has eleven voting members, four of whom are appointed by the Donors' Council. These members are initially appointed for a three year term, with the opportunity to be re-appointed for an additional three years. The four members currently appointed by the Donors' Council are Emmy Simmons (United States of America), Bernhard Lehmann (Switzerland), Mercedes Araoz (Peru), and Jean-Christophe Gouache (International Seed Federation).

Two members will be eligible for re-appointment at the Fall 2022 Donors' Council meeting: Mercedes Araoz and Jean-Christophe Gouache. The Crop Trust Secretariat will support the Donors' Council Chair and Vice-Chair with the nomination process in the lead-up to the Fall 2022 meeting.

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Executive Director informed Donors' Council members that information regarding the Fall 2022 meeting will be circulated in due time. The Chair thanked the Donors' Council members for their participation and closed the meeting.

Annex 1: List of Participants

Affiliation	Name	Role
Australia	Fiona Lynn	Director, Agriculture and Food Security Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Australia	Elena Martin Avila	Assistant Director, Agricultural Development and Food Security Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Brazil	Mariana Marshall	Alternate Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO, WFP, and IFAD
Canada	Julie Emond	Alternative Permanent Representative of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the U.N.
CCS Fundraising	Charlie Michaud	Principal and Managing Director
CCS Fundraising	Claire Bens	Assistant Vice President
CCS Fundraising	Jodie Jones	Consultant
CCS Fundraising	Mateja Lucic	Director
Chicago Council on Global Affairs	Catherine Bertini	Distinguished Fellow, Global Food and Agriculture
Czechia	Vlastimil Zedek	Head of Unit of Renewable Energy Sources and Environmental Strategies, Dept of the Environment and Organic Farming, Ministry of Ag
European Union	Darrell Sexstone	Program Manager, European Commissions Department for International Cooperation and Development
European Union	Thom van Stralen	Traineeship, EU Delegation to the UN organizations in Rome
FAO	Ismahane Elouafi	Chief Scientist
FAO	Dan Leskien	Senior Liaison Officer of the Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources
Germany, GIZ	Alexander Schöning	Advisor
Germany, KfW	Jochen Harnisch	Head of Division - Agriculture, Water, Biodiversity for West Africa
India	Ashwani Kumar	Joint Secretary (Seeds & GC), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
International Seed Federation	Michael Keller	Secretary General
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Kent Nnadozie	Secretary
Netherlands, MoA	Kim van Seeters	Senior Policy Officer, European Agricultural and Fisheries Policies and Food Security
Norway	Daniel van Gilst	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad Department for Climate, Energy, and Environment, Senior Advisor

Spain	Gonzalo Eiriz	Deputy Director General for Analysis, Coordination and Statistics at the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Sweden, Sida	AnnaKarin Norling	Senior Research Advisor
Switzerland, SDC	Bruce Campbell	Programme Manager, Global Food Security, Global Cooperation Department
Republic of Korea	Taek-Ryoun Kwon	Director General, Technology Cooperation Bureau, Rural Development Administration (RDA)
United States of America, USAID	Robert Bertram	Chief Scientist, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
Crop Trust	Stefan Schmitz	Executive Director
Crop Trust	Dezreen Cameron-Stein	Finance and Investment Manager
Crop Trust	Hannes Dempewolf	Director of External Affairs
Crop Trust	Janny van Beem	Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator
Crop Trust	Amrita Narayanan	Strategic Partnerships Manager
Crop Trust	Isbandiyar Valiyev	Partnerships Assistant
Crop Trust	Bailey Cate	Partnerships Assistant

Annex 2: Meeting Agenda

25th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council Agenda

28 March 2022
Videoconference

Time (CET)	Topic
14:00	1. Welcome and Round of Introductions Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
14:10	2. Words of welcome from the new Chair of the Crop Trust Executive Board Catherine Bertini, Chair of the Crop Trust Executive Board
14:15	3. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes Approval of the minutes from the 24th Donors' Council meeting held on 7 October 2021 Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
14:20	4. Oral Update by the Executive Director on recent development and events Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director of the Crop Trust
14:30	5. Resource Mobilisation: Key recommendations for a new financing strategy for the Crop Trust Representative from CCS Fundraising
15:10	6. Update on the Crop Trust's work on Capacity Building Janny van Beem, Global Genebank Partnership Coordinator
15:30	7. Finance and Investment Report Dezreen Cameron-Stein, Head of Finance and Investment
15:45	8. Donors' Council Business: Executive Board Appointments upcoming in Fall 2022 Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director of the Crop Trust
15:55	9. Conclusions and Next Steps

