



Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

25 October 2022

The Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust ('Crop Trust') met on 25 October 2022 in Bonn, Germany, including a hybrid-virtual participation via videoconference. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Republic of Korea. The meeting was attended by representatives of donors, multilateral partners, Crop Trust Executive Board members 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 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Ms. Felicitas Röhrig, Senior Policy Advisor (BMZ), welcomed meeting participants to Bonn and to BMZ facilities. Ms. Röhrig commended the Crop Trust on its work to conserve agrobiodiversity, mentioning the importance of the Crop Trust's mission especially in the face of climate change, conflict, and other global crises. BMZ recognizes the urgent need to conserve crop diversity in perpetuity and is a strong supporter of the Crop Trust's endowment and its Strategic Development project.

Ms. Röhrig complimented the cooperation between the Crop Trust and the CGIAR, highlighting the need for continued collaboration, including through joint-fundraising and additional types of engagement following the end of the Genebank Platform.

2. Welcome and Round of Introductions

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

3. Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes from the 25th Meeting



The agenda of the 26th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council was adopted by the Donors' Council members. The Minutes of the 25th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council, held on 28 March 2022, were approved.

4. Crop Trust Highlights and Recent Developments

The Executive Director of the Crop Trust, Mr. Stefan Schmitz, began his remarks by informing the Donors' Council of expected new donor contributions to the Crop Trust in 2022, which totaled USD 23.7 million. He highlighted the Crop Trust 2030 Strategy, noting that the Strategy has three goals: (1) funding essential operations and system-wide support of International Genebanks and Svalbard Global Seed Vault; (2) implementing projects to upgrade and otherwise support national genebanks; (3) raise the profile of plant genetic resources and crop diversity on the global development agenda.

The Executive Director shared highlights from the Crop Trust's work since 2020, noting the continued cooperation with the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) and the Norwegian Government in the management of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. He reported that as of October 2022, the Vault holds nearly 1.2 million seed samples from 39 genebanks across the globe.

The Executive Director also highlighted the cooperation between the Crop Trust and the International Plant Treaty, including through the Emergency Reserve – a joint initiative designed to provide urgent support to genebanks in crisis. The Emergency Reserve has already provided support to the Yemeni national genebank to replace batteries providing power to the cold storage unit. The Crop Trust and International Plant Treaty collaborated in additional crisis support activities, including helping to secure the Ukrainian collection and supporting the rescue of the CATIE coffee collection in Costa Rica.

The Executive Director reported strengthened cooperation with the Pacific Community's genebank in Fiji with the support of the Government of New Zealand.

The Executive Director also informed the Donors' Council of progress on the Crop Trust's current projects, including:

- Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihood and Development BOLD (Norway),
- Seeds for Resilience (Germany BMZ-KfW),
- Templeton project on finger millet and grasspea pre-breeding (Templeton Foundation),
- Crop Conservation Strategies (Germany BMEL-BLE) and
- Darwin Initiative project on sweet potato conservation and exchange in Africa (UK)



5. Crop Trust's Long-Term support to International Genebanks: Perspectives and Challenges

Next, the Executive Director provided an update on the Crop Trust's long-term support to international genebanks, highlighting the two mechanisms used by the Crop Trust to financially support the essential operations of key genebanks for the long term: Long-Term Grants (LTGs) and Long-term Partnership Agreements (LPAs). The Crop Trust eventually aims to provide all international genebanks with LPAs, which cover the entirety of the costs of essential genebank operations. The allocation of LPAs is dependent on whether genebanks meet agreed performance targets and if the Crop Trust has adequate resources in the endowment.

The Executive Director explained that due to a challenging donor landscape over the past couple of years, in part due to COVID and turbulent financial markets, the Crop Trust anticipates the rolling out of additional long-term financial commitments to partner genebanks at a somewhat slower rate than might be expected from the likely demand. This is already reflected in the Crop Trust's projected financial support to international collections in 2022 and in the following years. The Executive Director reiterated that by further building the endowment, the Crop Trust is committed to working towards providing the entirety of funding for the essential operations of international genebanks in the future.

The European Commission inquired whether the Crop Trust's current projections were inflation-adjusted. The Executive Director responded that current projections of all genebank support consider a base inflation of only 2% p.a. The World Bank encouraged CGIAR donors to further support the Crop Trust's endowment, emphasizing that by supporting the endowment donors are simultaneously supporting the CGIAR. The World Bank underscored that investments into the endowment are forever, making the endowment an essential vehicle for long-term support to international genebanks.

Norway inquired how the Crop Trust envisioned the endowment expanding in the coming years. The Executive Director stressed that current projections for future funding to CGIAR genebanks are conservative, with hopes that the endowment continues to grow so that the Crop Trust can provide additional support. The Executive Director reiterated that the Crop Trust prioritizes support to international collections as defined under Article 15 of the International Plant Treaty.

6. Crop Trust Financing Strategy

The Director of External Affairs, Mr. Hannes Dempewolf, opened this agenda item and introduced Mr. Charlie Michaud, Principal and Managing Director at CCS Fundraising. In



2021, CCS Fundraising conducted a feasibility study in preparation for the development of the Crop Trust's new financing strategy. CCS Fundraising is currently the firm responsible for supporting the Crop Trust's planning for a fundraising campaign.

Mr. Michaud explained that a fundraising campaign is an intensive and strategic effort designed to secure a target amount of financial support over a specified time period. It requires dedicated leadership and involves a pool of engaged funders and other champions to mobilize new potential supporters.

Mr. Michaud provided a brief overview on the Crop Trust's proposed endowment fundraising campaign, emphasizing that the endowment is a proven financial mechanism and has performed well over the course of the Crop Trust's existence. Mr. Michaud highlighted that even with turbulent financial markets, the timing remains right to embark on such a fundraising effort due to the Crop Trust's proven accountability and increasingly important role in ensuring food security and adapting food systems to climate change.

Over the next months, CCS Fundraising will help prepare the Crop Trust for such a fundraising campaign to ensure that the Crop Trust can continue to grow its endowment and guarantee the world's food supply, forever.

The Netherlands inquired whether other initiatives the Crop Trust had done in the past, such as Food Forever, were being explored in preparation for the endowment campaign. Mr. Michaud noted that they were looking into previous fundraising and awareness raising campaigns led by the Crop Trust and will take note of previous important partners and stakeholders to help identify potential leaders for the endowment campaign.

The European Commission questioned whether there were any expectations by the Crop Trust stemming from the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), specifically when it comes to using biodiversity as part of the case for support for further endowment contributions. The Director of External Affairs agreed that discussions deriving from the CBD will be very important for the Crop Trust and highlighted that as part of the endowment campaign the Crop Trust is working to highlight the relevance of its work at the nexus of food security, climate change and biodiversity.

The International Seed Federation emphasized the importance of highlighting the specific role the Crop Trust plays in the food system so that the message is not lost in the current mass of organizations asking for climate, food security and biodiversity investments. The Director of External Affairs and Mr. Michaud agreed that the Crop Trust's messaging will focus on the Crop Trust's proven and successful model for ensuring crop diversity is safeguarded in perpetuity for the benefit of all humanity.



The United States emphasized the need for the Crop Trust to have strong messaging around climate change given that the climate crisis continues to be a large part of political and philanthropic discourse and interests. The United States inquired whether the Crop Trust is thinking about industry sponsorship of particular crops or collections as part of the endowment campaign. Mr. Michaud confirmed that soliciting contributions from corporations will be part of campaign efforts but not an explicit and primary focus.

The World Bank reiterated the benefit of an endowment fund, noting that the Crop Trust should continue to communicate the uniqueness of the endowment. Mr. Michaud noted that while the endowment can be an asset in fundraising, some donors do not have the ability to donate to endowment funds. Thus, it will be important for the Crop Trust to be open to both endowment contributions and cash investments that help temporarily defray costs that would otherwise be met by endowment returns.

7. Crop Trust Institutional Budgets and Investment Management

Ms. Janet Muir, Director of Finance, presented an overview of the Crop Trust's institutional budget and investment management. The Director of Finance provided details on the Crop Trust's endowment fund investments, reporting that the endowment has been impacted by market volatility, causing a reduction of 16.9% in the fund between December 2021 and August 2022. The endowment fund is expected to further reduce by 6% in the month of September 2022.

The Director of Finance explained to the Donors' Council that, the annual investment returns continues fluctuating and the Crop Trust withdrawal has been 4% or less from the endowment fund annually. The Crop Trust has withdrawn a total of USD 66 million from the USD fund since inception, primarily to fund the CGIAR genebanks. The Director of Finance reported that despite the withdrawal of USD 66 million, the cumulative contribution to the endowment, as of August 2022, is less than the market value of the fund. The Director of Finance noted that the Crop Trust will begin to repay the EUR 50 million KfW loan in November 2022.

The Director of Finance reported that Mercer is the outsourced Chief Investment Officer for all funds as of February 2022 and highlighted Mercer's position on the Crop Trust's goal of returns amounting to the US Consumer Price Index +4% per annum. The Director of Finance emphasized that Mercer is confident that this goal is achievable over the long-term, but will require a relatively high-risk investment strategy.

The Director of Finance reported the activities of the Investment Committee, highlighting that the committee is made up of board members and external investment professionals.



The Investment Committee oversees the management of the endowment fund and meets quarterly.

The Director of Finance noted that the Crop Trust is a signatory to the UN Principles of Responsible Investment. In 2022, the Crop Trust has been further developing its sustainable investment policy with the goal of becoming net carbon zero by 2040.

Both Mercer and the Investment Committee will recommend to the Executive Board that the Crop Trust becomes a signatory of the Task Force on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures and the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures.

The Director of Finance reported that the Crop Trust will present a balanced budget to the Executive Board in 2022. The Crop Trust is proposing two new Long-term Partnership Agreements in 2023, for CIAT and IITA.

The Director of Finance reported that the Crop Trust prepared a Multi-Year Budget for 2023-2025. She explained that expenditure is expected to increase as more Long-term Partnership Agreements are signed.

The Director of Finance finally noted that the Crop Trust recently tendered for a new auditor and will present its recommendations to the Executive Board at its upcoming meeting.

The United States inquired about the proposal of transferring endowment funds in 2022 to the Crop Trust's unrestricted reserves. The Executive Director noted that the amount kept in the unrestricted reserves is good practice, given that the Crop Trust is an organization with assets of more than USD 300 million. Having USD 5-8 million in the reserves allows the organization to be flexible and react to unplanned situations.

The United States also inquired about the 10% overhead on donor funded projects reported in the Multi Year Budget. The Director of Finance noted that the average overhead rate is 9%, and therefore the reported 10% is a conservative estimate.

The World Bank inquired about the Crop Trust's planned expenditure from the endowment for genebanks. The Director of Finance noted that the figures for support to genebanks in 2022 and subsequent years are not as easy to compare with those of earlier years, as the end of the Genebank Platform means a certain "system change" with completely different financial flows between donors, Crop Trust and CGIAR genebanks. The fact is that the Crop Trust's funding from its Endowment income (which includes both the Crop Trust's direct grants to genebanks and system-wide services like information system development, QMS and capacity development) are growing steadily.



The European Union inquired how the Crop Trust is mitigating risks of reduced funding to genebanks given the decrease of the Crop Trust's assets. The Director of Finance noted that the Crop Trust's unrestricted reserves have been set up to help mitigate this. The Executive Director emphasized that the Crop Trust cannot fully crisis proof the system at the moment, but the Crop Trust can act as a cushion for the system until endowment goals are met.

8. Donors' Council Nominations for the Executive Board of the Crop Trust

The Chair asked the Donors' Council to move by consensus to re-appoint Ms. Mercedes Araoz and Mr. Jean-Christophe Gouache to the Executive Board of the Crop Trust for three-year terms (2023-2025). Their re-appointment was confirmed.

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Chair informed Donors' Council members that information regarding the 2023 Donors' Council meetings will be circulated by the Crop Trust Secretariat 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 (Virtual)	Director, Agriculture and Food Security Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Brazil	Mariana Marshall (Virtual)	Alternate Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO, WFP, and IFAD
Canada	Julie Emond (Virtual)	Alternative Permanent Representative of Canada to the Food and Agriculture Agencies of the U.N.
CCS Fundraising	Charlie Michaud	Principal and Managing Director
European Union	Darrell Sexstone	Program Manager, European Commissions Department for International Cooperation and Development
FAO	Ismahane Elouafi (Virtual)	Chief Scientist
FAO	Irene Hoffmann	Secretary, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
German Plant Breeders Association (BDP)	Stefan Lütke Entrup	Managing Director
Germany, BMZ	Felicitas Röhrig	Senior Policy Advisor
Germany, GIZ	Alexander Schöning	Advisor
Germany, GIZ	Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess	Advisor
Germany, KfW	Carolin Kremheller	Portfolio Manager - Agriculture, Water, Biodiversity for West Africa
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 (Virtual)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad Department for Climate, Energy, and Environment, Senior Advisor
Spain	José Antonio Parcha (Virtual)	Assistant, Permanent Mission of Spain to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Sweden, Sida	AnnaKarin Norling (Virtual)	Senior Research Advisor
Switzerland, SDC	Bruce Campbell	Programme Manager, Global Food Security, Global Cooperation Department
Republic of Korea	Taek-Ryoun Kwon	Director General, International Technology Cooperation Center, Rural Development Administration (RDA)



Republic of Korea	Hosun Lee	Senior Researcher, International Technology Cooperation Center, Rural Development Administration (RDA)
Republic of Korea	Hyun-Jeong Hwang (Virtual)	International technology cooperation coordinator, Rural Development Administration (RDA)
United States of America, USAID	Robert Bertram	Chief Scientist, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security
World Bank	Jonathan Wadsworth	Lead Climate Change Specialist
Crop Trust Executive Board	Catherine Bertini	Board Chair
Crop Trust Executive Board	Emmy Simmons	Board Member
Crop Trust Executive Board	Marcio de Miranda Santos	Board Member
Crop Trust Executive Board	Masaru Iwanga	Board Member
Crop Trust	Stefan Schmitz	Executive Director
Crop Trust	Janet Muir	Director of Finance
Crop Trust	Hannes Dempewolf	Director of External Affairs
Crop Trust	Sarada Krishnan	Director of Programs
Crop Trust	Amrita Narayanan	Strategic Partnerships Manager
Crop Trust	Bailey Cate	Partnerships Assistant, Minute taker



Annex 2: Agenda

26th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council Agenda

Time (CEST)	Topic
13:00	1. Welcome by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) Ms. Felicitas Röhrig, Senior Policy Advisor, BMZ
13:05	2. Welcome and Round of Introductions Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
13:15	3. Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes from the 25th Meeting Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
13:20	4. Crop Trust Highlights and Recent Developments Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director
13:35	Discussion
13:45	5. Crop Trust's Long-Term support to International Genebanks: Perspectives and Challenges Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director
14:00	Discussion
14:10	6. Crop Trust Financing Strategy Hannes Dempewolf, Director External Affairs Charlie Michaud, Principal and Managing Director, CCS Fundraising
14:35	Discussion
14:45	7. Crop Trust Institutional Budgets and Investment Management Janet Muir, Director of Finance
15:00	Discussion
15:10	8. Donor's Council Nominations for the Executive Board of the Crop Trust Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director
15:20	9. Conclusions and Next Steps Dr. Taek-Ryoun Kwon, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council



15:30

End of Meeting