



THE CROP TRUST

2015 ANNUAL REPORT
SUMMARY

WWW.CROPTRUST.ORG/2015

DEAR FRIENDS

In this historic year, the nations of the world committed to a guiding set of Sustainable Development Goals and to action against the challenges of climate change.

And the Crop Trust continued in its commitment to safeguard the agrobiodiversity that lies at the very root of sustainable development and climate adaptation alike.

What did that commitment look like in 2015?

The sound administrative and financial management of our partner genebanks got sounder. The Crop Wild Relatives project reached its peak with a full program of action across some 30 countries. Genesys, the global portal to information about crop collections, got more powerful and easier to use.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault saw new deposits, and its first retrieval – of important material from the genebank of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) in Aleppo, Syria. Seeing those seeds sprout again will be an occasion for joy. There are solutions to our world's challenges to be found in the diversity of life – as long as we keep it alive.

With thanks to all our supporters,



MARIE HAGA AND WALTER FUST



“ From the farmers of the Sacred Valley of Peru to The Prince of Wales, in 2015 our partners left us with no doubt that the work we do, and the global system we are building together, is all at once inspiring, exciting, and absolutely essential. ”

MARIE HAGA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“ This year we continued to build up our support to crop collections, their inter-linkage in a global system for ex situ conservation, and the accessibility of all the diversity they hold. This is a system that serves plant breeders, farmers – ultimately, all of us. ”

WALTER FUST, CHAIR OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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www.croptrust.org/2015

THE CROP TRUST IN NUMBERS



**GRANT EXPENDITURE PROVIDED TO CONSERVE CROP DIVERSITY
GLOBALLY**

USD 28.4M



**GRANT EXPENDITURE PROVIDED IN SUPPORT OF COLLECTING AND
CONSERVING CROP WILD RELATIVES**

USD 1.375M



CROP VARIETIES AVAILABLE IN INTERNATIONAL COLLECTIONS

572,000



**NUMBER OF COUNTRIES RECEIVING SAMPLES FROM CROP TRUST
SUPPORTED COLLECTIONS**

114



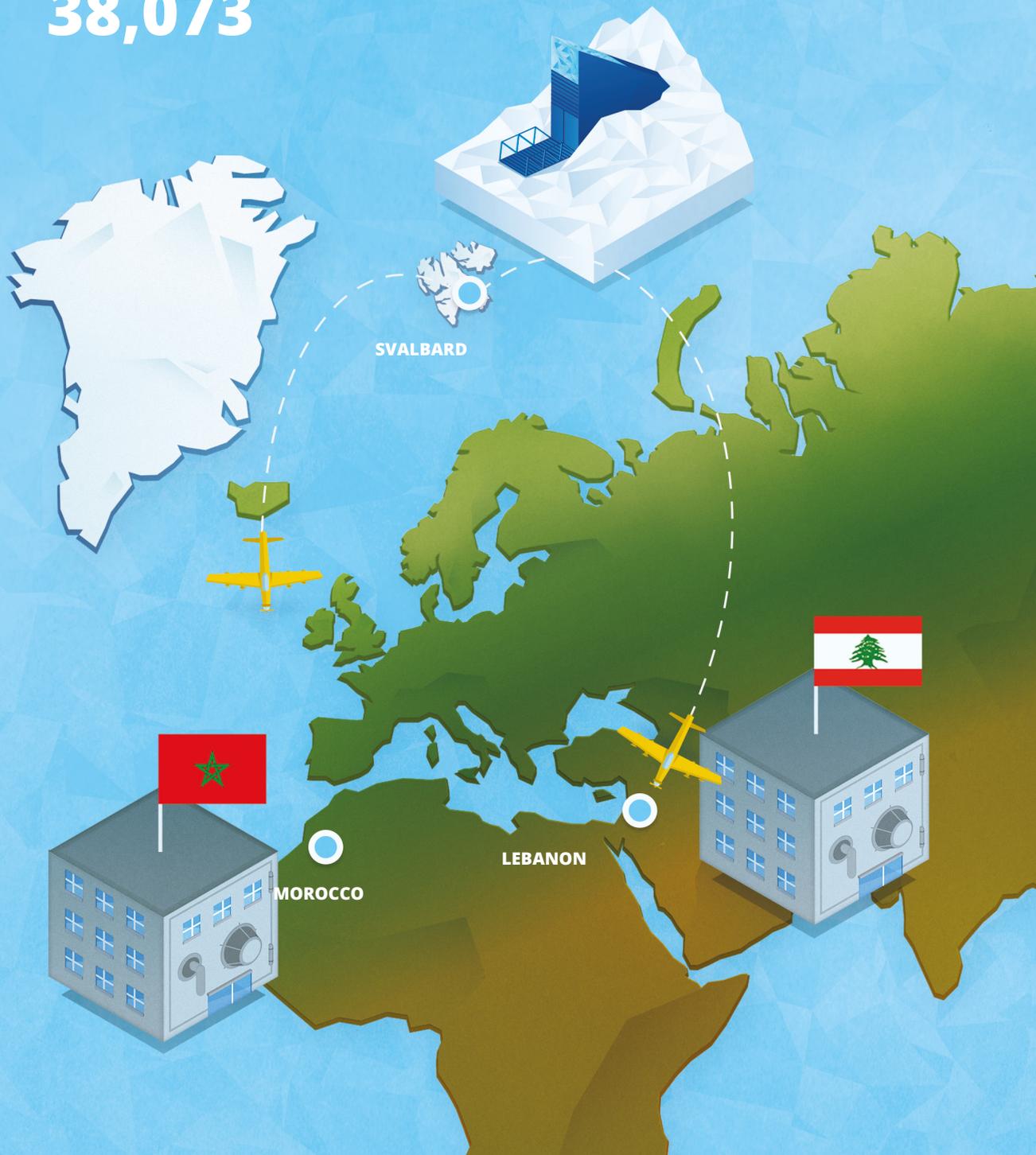
CROP WILD RELATIVES NATIONAL COLLECTING GUIDES DEVELOPED

14

FIRST RETRIEVAL OF SEEDS FROM SVALBARD

Crop Varieties sent to Morocco and Lebanon:

38,073



GLOBAL GENE BANK PARTNERSHIP

The 12 collections funded under our Global Genebank Partnership hold a large share of the world's crop diversity in trust for humanity, amounting to more than 750,000 accessions.

The Crop Trust provided these crop collections with USD 2.537 million in funding this year through long-term grants, and managed a further USD 21.01 million in CGIAR funding through its leadership role in the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Genebanks. The CRP has been under way since 2012, and during an audit this year we polled six groups of stakeholders – from genebank managers to finance, technical and administrative staff – to find out how we're doing so far.

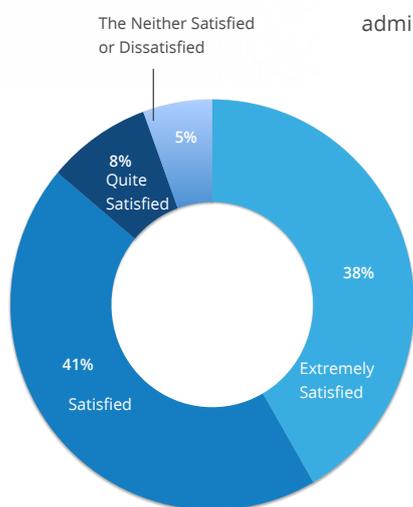


FIGURE 1. OVERALL RESPONSE FROM GENE BANK MANAGERS

“ The Crop Trust set good criteria: international standards, value for the money, push towards quality germplasm products. Let us stick to them. ”

CGIAR GENE BANK MANAGER, 2015 EVALUATION OF THE GLOBAL GENE BANK PARTNERSHIP

EXTERNAL REVIEWS

These very comprehensive studies form the basis for decisions on upgrading the genebanks to keep them at the top of their game. This year, review teams focused on the International Potato Center (CIP) in Peru and World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) in Kenya. Both resulted in solid plans to further enhance these crucial collections in the years ahead. As a follow-up to previous reviews, Recommendation Action Plans were set in motion in 2014 by IRRI and CIAT, and translated into significant progress this year.

SEED LONGEVITY INITIATIVE

Participants in this initiative are analyzing historical data on more than 1,000 species from half a century of CGIAR genebank records, which will ultimately refine our understanding of the differences between species and the best conditions for seed storage over long spans of time.

CRYOPRESERVATION

The Crop Trust has been supporting work to improve and scale up cryobanking for years, and 2015 saw some of the biggest progress to date. Both CIP in Peru and IITA in Nigeria have set up equipment to manufacture liquid nitrogen on site. These will ensure that both institutes can keep supplying their cryotanks with the essential coolant to keep the samples in sub -100°C temperatures.

These are the kinds of advances, along with others in quality management, information systems and the coordination of efforts through crop strategies, that are transforming individual genebank efforts into a strong global partnership.



CROP WILD RELATIVES & THE PROMISE OF ADAPTATION

The Crop Trust shares a vision, with the Kew Millennium Seed Bank in the UK and its many other collaborators in the Crop Wild Relatives (CWR) project, of introducing survival skills from the wild cousins of our food crops to prepare a new generation of crops for climate change.

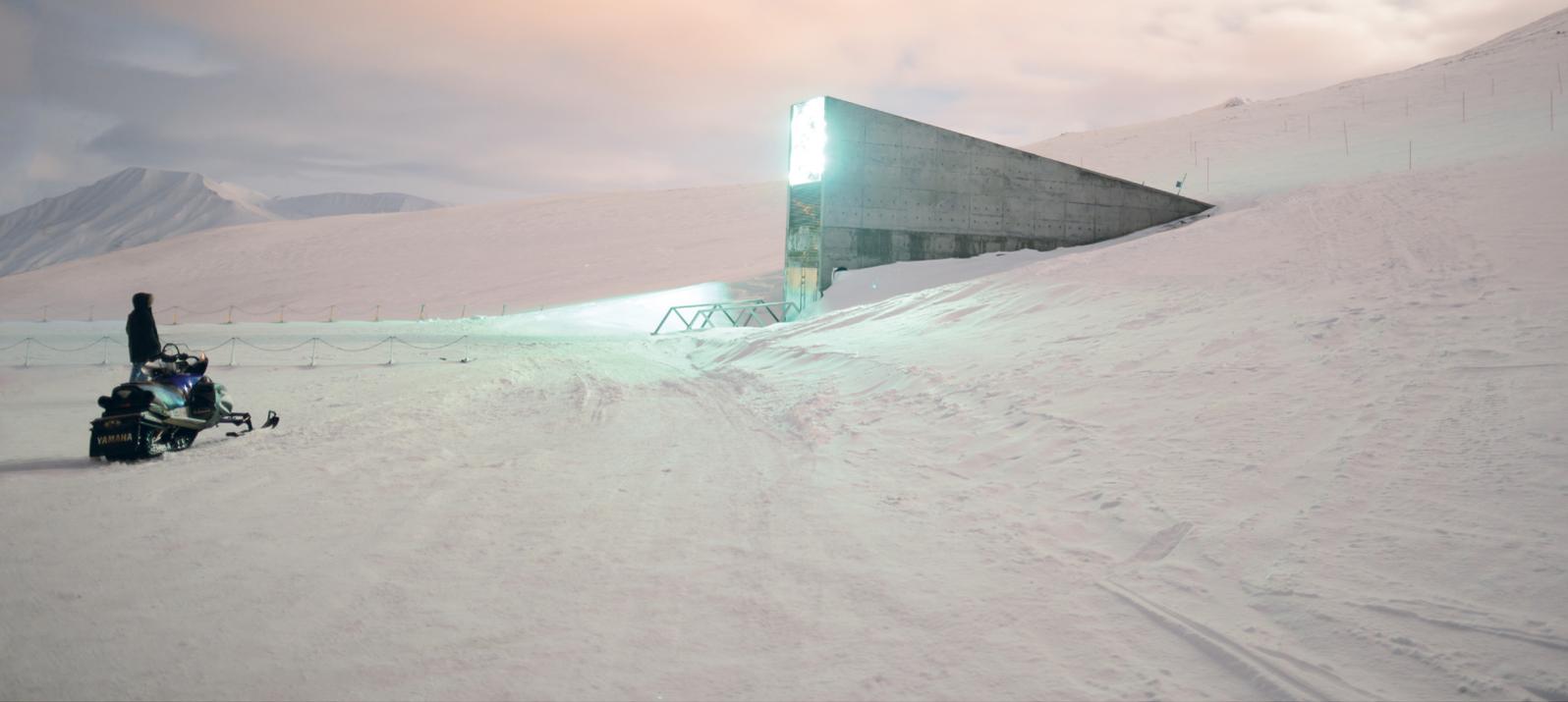
An ambitious idea to adapt agriculture has become a reality: over the course of the year, work focused on launching new collecting partnerships, processing the seeds coming in from the field, assessing and supporting genebank information systems, and starting up pre-breeding efforts.

Collecting agreements are now in place with 15 countries where the Gap Analysis conducted in previous years identified high priority areas to collect missing diversity. Our partners are in the field seeking out wild relatives everywhere, from apples in Azerbaijan to sorghums in Sudan. And thanks to partners in nearly 30 countries, 19 pre-breeding projects are now up and running.



REVAMPED ONLINE PRESENCE

The seeds, data, and breeding lines coming out of these efforts will be shared with the world through an overhauled Crop Wild Relatives website. This was launched during the first meeting of 39 Global Partners in Izmir, Turkey in October.



SVALBARD GLOBAL SEED VAULT

2015 was a remarkable year for the Seed Vault. It witnessed the deposit of more than 35,000 varieties from 14 institutions, but it also saw seeds being taken off the shelves to restart a global collection for the very first time.

TIMELINE OF THE RETRIEVAL

Between 2008 and 2014, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) deposited 116,484 samples to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault from its genebank in Aleppo, Syria.

When it came time to retrieve the seeds, we moved swiftly and got the seeds safely to Morocco and Lebanon.

FEBRUARY 2011 - FEBRUARY 2014

Amidst the Syrian conflict, ICARDA makes four deposits to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

26 FEBRUARY 2008

ICARDA makes its very first deposit to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Over the next three years, ICARDA deposits the majority of their collection.

IN 2015

36,130

NUMBER OF VARIETIES ADDED TO THE VAULT

38,073

NUMBER OF VARIETIES TAKEN OUT OF THE VAULT



FROM THE ANDES TO THE VAULT

Representatives of indigenous Andean communities travelled more than 11,000 km from the Parque de la Papa in Cusco, Peru, to the Global Seed Vault to deposit 750 potato varieties.

FEBRUARY

The deposit in February included varieties from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), AfricaRice and the Nordic Genetic Resource Centre (NordGen), and the German Parliamentary State Secretary Peter Bleser attended the deposit.

AUGUST

Representatives of indigenous Andean communities living and working at Parque de la Papa, near Cusco, Peru, deposited 750 potato accessions. They were joined by José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), along with scientific experts and delegations from Costa Rica and Norway to celebrate the preservation of these vital crops for future generations.

SEPTEMBER

After years of civil strife, precious seeds that had originally been sent to the Seed Vault from Aleppo, Syria by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) were safely delivered to Morocco and Lebanon in September 2015, having undertaken a 10,000 kilometer round trip. The shipment contained 128 boxes with a total of 38,073 seed samples, which will be planted during this and next year's cropping seasons. Duplicate seeds will be used to re-establish the ICARDA active collection, and also be returned to the Seed Vault for safekeeping.

22 SEPTEMBER 2015

In coordination with ICARDA and NordGen, 38,073 samples of crops are taken out of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and returned to ICARDA.

19 - 23 OCTOBER 2015

The seed rescue story is covered in over 300 news outlets worldwide.

1 SEPTEMBER 2015

The Crop Trust and NordGen meet in Bonn. During the meeting, ICARDA calls in to speak about the situation in Aleppo, Syria. The decision is made with ICARDA to reconstruct the ICARDA collection in Morocco and Lebanon.

19 OCTOBER 2015

Precious seeds that had originally been sent by ICARDA for safeguarding in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault are safely delivered to Morocco and Lebanon today, having undertaken a 10,000-kilometer round-trip.

15 MARCH 2016

Chickpea samples brought from the Svalbard Global Seed Vault bloom in Lebanon.

The Crop Trust has funded a portion of the operation costs of the Seed Vault since its inception in 2008. The Crop Trust continued to support the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in partnership with the Norwegian government and the Nordic Genetic Resources Center (NordGen).



GLOBAL STRATEGIES FOR A GLOBAL SYSTEM

In the first years of its existence, between 2004 and 2010, the Crop Trust gathered together groups of experts to develop a series of global conservation strategies.

This year we again put existing strategies to use in targeting much-needed and began work on new ones for very different types of crops: apple, Bambara groundnut, coconut and forages.

We also drew on our experience with the crop-by-crop global strategies to finalize a new Global System Strategy, laying out an agenda for how to best target Crop Trust funding for long-term conservation.



COCONUT CONSERVATION

The global strategy for coconut, first drafted in 2008, reflected the conservation community's concerns about the vulnerability of the crucial South Pacific coconut genebank in Papua New Guinea. In 2015, this large and unique field collection continued to be threatened by the spread of Bogia Coconut Syndrome from surrounding areas. The Crop Trust convened a meeting at the site of the genebank where 27 participants from international and national institutes could assess the problem for themselves and work out a rescue plan.

A global system for conservation cannot be built without clear, transparent, strategic thinking, and the global crop strategies give us all the opportunity to do just that.

PAULA BRAMEL, SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR

INFORMATION SYSTEMS, INSIDE AND OUT

Managing data within the walls of a genebank and sharing that data with the world are two different, but not isolated, challenges.

A genebank information technology assessment, designed in 2014, was brought to 26 national and regional genebanks in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Data management experts engaged by the Crop Trust visited them over several days to piece together a detailed understanding of information practices and the challenges they bring.



In 2015, GRIN-Global was extended to allow direct publishing of accession passport data from a genebank's GRIN-Global installation to the Genesys online portal. This functionality is being tested by CIMMYT's genebank in preparation for a general release. It forms a promising link between these two major information tools. Additionally, GRIN-Global training courses were organized in Colombia and Bolivia, and the system was presented at meetings of genetic resources experts in Morocco, Colombia and Brazil.



Genesys itself, which now provides unprecedented access to information on more than 6 million genebank accessions globally, was updated and enhanced. This update resulted from a six-month review of the user experience and interviews with stakeholder. It included completion of translation of the site into eight languages, and a communications campaign to raise awareness of the portal's potential among genebank users.



DivSeek is an international initiative that brings together 69 organizations in 30 countries for 'big data' approaches to exploring and using information on crops' genetic makeup. The partnership was launched in January in San Diego, California. In May, the Steering Committee met in Rome, Italy to review the state of the art in genomic, phenomic, molecular and bioinformatics tools and strategies, and drew up a multi-year strategy and work plan that will blaze a trail for this community-driven effort in the years ahead.

GENEBANK OPERATIONS & THE PURSUIT OF HIGHER QUALITY

At the Crop Trust we believe genebanks need a strong quality management system (QMS) to guide and maintain the process to sustained excellence.

In 2015, Janny van Beem, Genebank Quality Specialist, spent 10-20 days each at the genebanks of IRRI in the Philippines, CIAT in Colombia, AfricaRice in Benin and ICRISAT in India. Together with the staff, she started developing detailed plans for quality management of these already world-class facilities.

In addition, two Genebank Operations and Advanced Learning (GOAL) workshops were held, in Colombia and in India.



We are developing a quality management system that is tailor-made for genebanks, straightforward and inexpensive to implement.

CALI, COLOMBIA

35 participants
9 institutes from the Americas

NEW DELHI, INDIA*

23 participants
13 Asian countries

* Organized with the Crawford Foundation.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Crop Trust continued its program of providing long-term sustainable funding to the world's most important collections of crop diversity.

In 2015 the Crop Trust supported collections of banana, barley, bean, cassava, chickpea, edible aroids, faba bean, forages, grasspea, lentil, maize, pearl millet, rice, sorghum, sweet potato, wheat and yam.

GRANTS TO CONSERVE CROP DIVERSITY WORLDWIDE INCREASED

FROM **\$25.1M** (2014) TO **\$28.4M** (2015)

In 2015, the Crop Trust provided more than USD 28 million to fund the global system for the conservation of crop diversity for genebank operations, capacity building, staffing, collecting and prebreeding. These grants employed more than 1,000 people across the globe.

In 2015, implementation of the Fundraising Strategy continued with outreach to potential donor governments and private donors including foundations, corporations, and industry associations. Building relationships with current and prospective partners required additional investment in fundraising and communication activities towards leading up to the Crop Trust Pledging Conference. The operational expenditures as a percentage of total direct expenditures decreased in 2015 to only 8%.

OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DIRECT EXPENDITURES DECREASED

FROM **10%** (2014) TO **8%** (2015)

THE CROP DIVERSITY ENDOWMENT FUND

The Investment Objectives and Policies of the Crop Trust permit the annual withdrawal of up to 4% of the average market value of the Endowment Fund over the previous twelve quarters. In 2015, only 0.91% was released, funded by Endowment Fund capital. A grant from US Agency for International Development funded provided USD 2.3 million for operational expenditures in 2015.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CROP DIVERSITY ENDOWMENT FUND DECREASED

FROM **3.5%** (2014) TO **0.91%** (2015)

The Crop Trust is an official signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investing (UNPRI), an international framework for incorporating sustainability into investment decision-making. The Crop Trust believes that application of the UN PRI Principles improves alignment of the investment portfolio with its overall mission and with the broader objectives of society.

The Environmental, Social and Governance principles of investing were incorporated into the Crop Trust's Investment Policy Statement in 2014, and all investment managers have been informed of our status as a UNPRI signatory to promote the acceptance and implementation of the principles within the investment industry.

The Finance and Investment Committee of the Executive Board of the Crop Trust is responsible for matters relating to the financial affairs of the organization encompassing the areas of strategic financial planning, resource management, treasury management, investment and financial risk management, financial monitoring and policy related issues and to provide timely advice to the Board on areas within its remit.

3.7% PER YEAR

AVERAGE ANNUAL ENDOWMENT RETURN SINCE INCEPTION

The Crop Trust works closely with its investment advisors to manage the portfolio and monitor investment risks. We report quarterly to the Crop Trust's Finance and Investment Committee who then reports to the Executive Board.

The financial statements of the Crop Trust are prepared with reference to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). However, since existing IFRS do not cover issues unique to not-for-profit organizations, the Crop Trust has drawn from other widely used standards (such as the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) Accounting Standards Codification (ASC)) to provide guidance on issues of importance that are not yet addressed by existing IFRS.

PWC have confirmed that the Crop Trust's accounting policies are clear, transparent and easy to read and they have also confirmed that there is no requirement for us to comply with full IFRS at this time. The Finance Office, in collaboration with PWC, will continue to ensure that the accounting policies being applied in the financial statements are consistent with best practice, and IFRS, where possible.

FINANCIAL AUDIT

Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the Crop Trust's external auditors since 2013, have audited the financial statements of the Global Crop Diversity Trust for 2015 and provided an unqualified audit opinion.

The full Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report can be found in the annex attached.

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THANK YOU

We often say that we are a small organization with a big job. We don't mean it as a complaint; that is how we always planned it to be. It means that we don't need a lot of support, but our mission does.

We have you to thank for the endowment that is now funding the conservation and use of crop diversity worldwide. We have you to thank for every seed and plant the global system conserves.

As we build up the fund, we will be able to provide long-term, predictable funding to more crop collections around the world. We draw closer to a global system in which no crop diversity is ever in danger, and all is available for use.

I would like to offer our thanks to all who have supported our work, and to everyone else I would like to offer a hand in partnership for the future.

MICHAEL KOCH, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

“ *I know plants can adapt, and the intricate cooperation between people and our plants that we call agriculture can also adapt. But this won't happen without two factors: crop diversity and action.*

The Crop Trust works on both sides of the task of adaptation – conserving diversity and acting to put it to use – neither will save agriculture without the other.

A world that loses diversity loses options for the future, but a world that fails to take action to make the most of those options, for the good of all, is simply giving up. Measured in the contents of crop collections, our options are still in the millions. Please join us in seeing to it they lead to a better world.

Sir Peter Crane FRS
Crop Trust Board Member, 2007-2012 and 2014-2016

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THE CROP TRUST IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUPPORT FROM ACROSS THE WORLD, ALL DEDICATED TO THE FUTURE OF FOOD SECURITY, AGRICULTURE AND BIODIVERSITY.

The Crop Trust would like to thank the following people for their support for this year's annual report: Ambassador Walter Fust, Sir Peter Crane, The Crop Trust Staff, The Genebank Managers of the CGIAR, Paul Cox, Epic Agency and Getty Images Reportage.