20 years
CROP TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Celebrating 20 Years of the Crop Trust

Crop Annual Report - 2024

Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust)
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 7
53113 Bonn, Germany
www.croptrust.org

Crop Trust
Annual Report 2024

20 years

CROP TRUST

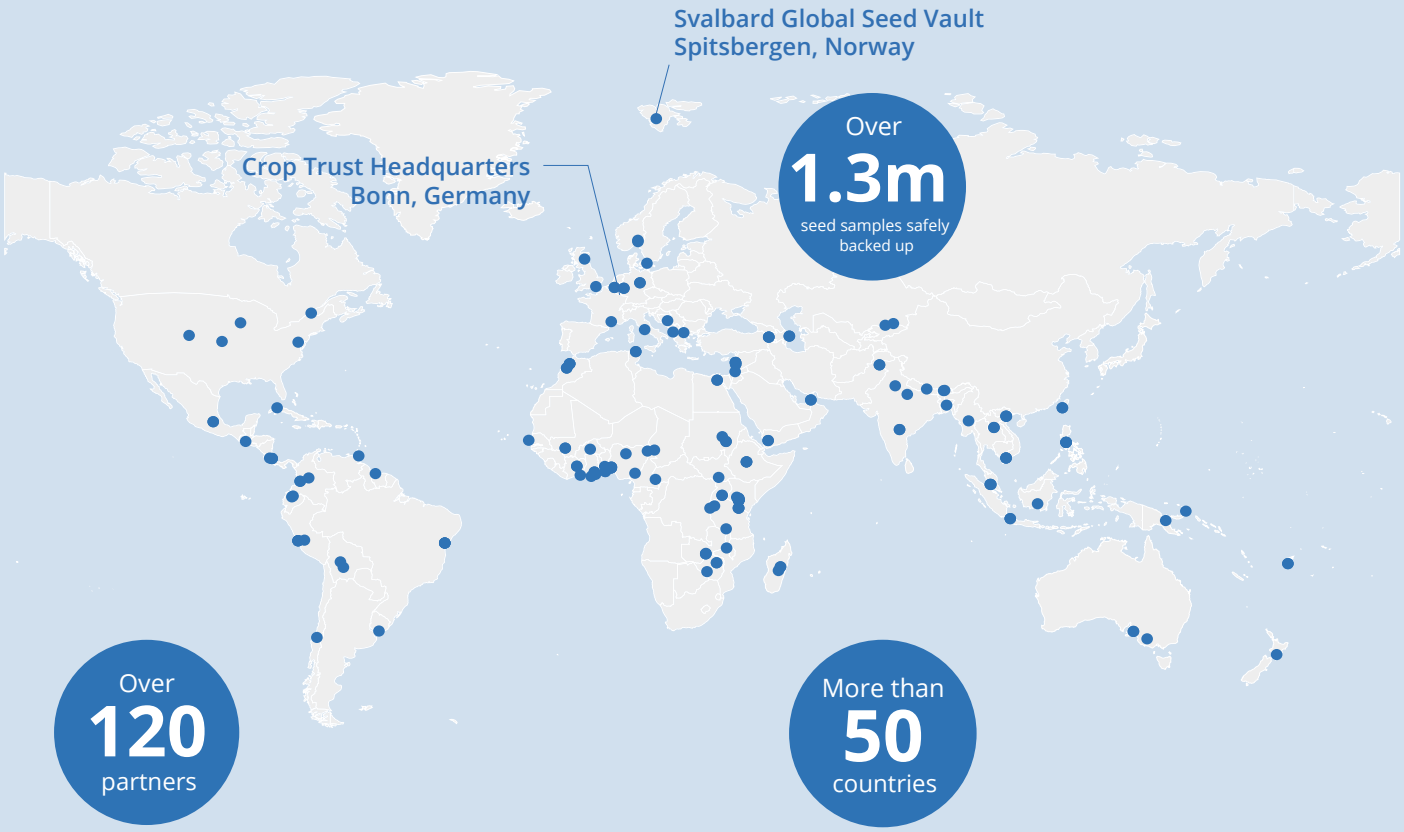
Securing our food, forever.

In This Report

The flower of the sweetpotato

Introduction

Our Partners



The Crop Trust works with partners worldwide including national genebanks, international collections, international organizations and universities.

The Year in Numbers

Crop diversity conserved:

USD 18.2m

was provided to projects and other activities that strengthen the conservation and use of the diversity of everything from banana to rice.

Crop diversity used:

80,000+ seed samples

were distributed by the international genebanks, including the CGIAR, in 2024.

Crop diversity safely backed up:

64,000+ seed samples

were added to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. As of December 2024, the Seed Vault safeguards over 1.3m seed samples from 123 institutions worldwide.

Crop diversity documented:

86% of the 4.3m

active accessions in the information platform Genesys were updated in 2024. As of December, 90% of the accessions in Genesys were up-to-date, allowing stakeholders around the globe to search for and request samples.

Crop diversity highlighted:

2.7m people reached

across social media channels, 987 media mentions and 136 stories, press releases, podcast episodes, videos and recipes amplified to promote crop diversity and the Crop Trust's efforts to advance the global genebank partnership.

Crop diversity financially secured:

USD 357m

was the market value of the Endowment Fund at the end of 2024. New contributions totaled USD 37.7m – the highest donation amount in one year in the history of the Crop Trust.

Leadership Message from the Chair of the Executive Board, Catherine Bertini

The year 2024 marked a significant milestone for the Crop Trust – our 20th anniversary as the world's only global organization solely dedicated to supporting the conservation of crop diversity in genebanks. Thanks to the support of our donors, partners and staff, we have made remarkable strides over the past two decades in safeguarding global food security. Yet, our mission is far from complete.

As the climate changes and environmental pressures grow, genebanks are more crucial than ever. They are the foundation for resilient food systems. These repositories of crop diversity are vital to ensuring the world's growing population can be fed on a warming planet. The Crop Trust works closely with genebanks to protect crop diversity, enabling breeders and researchers to develop resilient crop varieties that can withstand heat, drought, pests and diseases – challenges that are becoming increasingly severe.

In our anniversary year, we were particularly proud to see two of the Crop Trust's most influential pioneers receive well-deserved recognition for their contributions. In October, the World Food Prize Foundation honored Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin and Dr. Cary Fowler with the 2024 World Food Prize for their exceptional leadership in safeguarding the world's crop diversity.

As the first two Executive Directors of the Crop Trust, Geoff and Cary have been leading figures in crop diversity conservation for decades. They played instrumental roles in establishing the Crop Trust and establishing the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, the world's ultimate backup facility for crop diversity. Their dedication and vision have left an indelible mark on global food security. We were also honored to welcome Geoff back to the Crop Trust in 2024 as a member of the Executive Board alongside new appointees Dr. Josette Lewis, Mr. Juan Lucas Restrepo and Mr. Kaved Zahedi.

In 2024, we also made remarkable progress in securing the financial sustainability of our mission. The Endowment Fund grew from USD 305 million to USD 357 million. This sustainable financing mechanism ensures that crop diversity is protected for future generations and relies on the far-sighted generosity of donors to support the essential work of key genebanks worldwide.

We are deeply grateful for significant new funding received in 2024, including from the Governments of Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Norway and Ireland, along with Groupe Limagrain and others. We also deeply appreciate Dr. Fowler and Dr. Hawtin's contributions to the Endowment Fund from their World Food Prize award, which further cements their legacy with the Crop Trust.

The new contributions to the Endowment Fund allowed us to expand our long-term support to genebanks. Following an external review of its genebank, one of our CGIAR partners, AfricaRice became eligible for a Long-term Grant Agreement to support its genebank's essential operations.

We congratulate AfricaRice and all recipients of long-term support from the Endowment Fund for their dedication to preserving crop diversity forever, for the benefit of future generations. We must also recognize outstanding work by our project partners in 2024, which strengthened the global network of genebanks.

As we reflect on 20 years of the Crop Trust, and map the road ahead, we extend our deep gratitude to everyone who contributes to the conservation of crop diversity. Your commitment, whether through financial support, advocacy, research or work with the genebank community, is essential to achieving our shared goal, a world free from hunger and malnutrition.

Many thanks,

Catherine Bertini
Chair of the Executive Board, Crop Trust

Leadership Message from the Executive Director, Stefan Schmitz

Tonight, as I write this, 735 million people went to bed hungry. They will do so again tomorrow night, and the night after that. More suffer from malnutrition, straining both communities and economies. Our task is clear. We must grow more food and make it better.

How to do so took center stage at the 2024 conferences for the UN Rio Conventions, where the urgency of securing our global food future was underscored. Biodiversity loss, climate change and desertification threaten our ability to feed the world. But the good news is there is a solution – conserving and using crop diversity to develop more resilient and nutritious food systems.

In 2024, the Crop Trust built on the momentum of the first-ever Crop Diversity Summit, highlighting the need for food system transformation with crop diversity at its core. We championed collaboration and called for increased funding. Our partners and donors answered the call.

Thanks to this collective effort, we expanded our Endowment Fund, ensuring stable, long-term funding for key international genebanks. We also strengthened the global network of genebanks by enhancing data management systems and increasing the number of crop samples available through our Genesys platform and safety duplicated in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

Our projects also advanced in 2024. Seeds for Resilience supported national genebanks in Africa by implementing tailored action plans. The Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) project deepened its work with genebanks, explored ways to make more crop diversity accessible to farmers and explored how genebank can work with seed systems. BOLD partners deposited seeds in Svalbard and there was increased focus on opportunity crops. The BOLDER initiative of BOLD identified underutilized crops that can potentially open economic and nutritional opportunities for Africa. We also launched the Power of Diversity Funding Facility to further unlock the potential of opportunity crops.

The Crop Trust took the opportunity of our 20th anniversary in 2024 to actively engage in global dialogues. Key moments included hosting a Crop Diversity Day in Rabat, launching the African Vegetable Biodiversity Rescue Plan with the World Vegetable Center at the 2024 Africa Food Systems Summit, and engaging around the Rio Convention conferences convened by the UN. Every event reinforced a fundamental truth we have championed for two decades – crop diversity is food security.

The year concluded with two landmark celebrations. In October, our first two Executive Directors, Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin and Dr. Cary Fowler, were honored as the 2024 World Food Prize Laureates at the Borlaug Dialogue. Then, in November, we celebrated our 20th anniversary with many friends at Villa Hammerschmidt near our headquarters in Bonn. These occasions remind us that with visionary leadership and the unwavering support of donors, partners and staff, the Crop Trust is moving us ever closer to securing the future of food.

I invite you to explore this report, reflect on our achievements in 2024, and join the global genebank partnership. Because together, through crop diversity, we can build a world where no one needs to go to bed hungry.

Sincerely,

Stefan Schmitz
Executive Director, Crop Trust

A seed pod of the so-called "miracle" berry at the genebank of the University of Abomey-Calavi in Cotonou, Benin.

Highlights

Strategic Action Towards 2030

The year 2024 marked the first full year during which the Crop Trust was guided by the *2030 Strategic Plan: Food Forever*. The Strategic Plan was put in place to achieve the organization's vision of a world in which crop diversity is securely conserved for the long term and used to transform agrifood systems to be more sustainable, resilient and healthy.

Central to this vision is an effective global system of genebanks that secures millions of accessions of crop diversity, makes them available to each other and enables use by farmers, researchers and plant breeders to feed the world sustainably, forever.

In 2024, our work aligned with the goals set out in the Strategic Plan.

Scan to read the full Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Long-term Support for the Maintenance of Essential Genebank Operations

This goal is focused on permanently covering the costs of essential operations of all international genebanks recognized under Article 15 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (International Plant Treaty) by 2030. Our work in this area depends on our Crop Diversity Endowment Fund, a sustainable, long-term financing mechanism designed to support the vital work of genebanks. The value of the Endowment Fund increased from USD 305 million in 2024 to USD 357 million.

During the year, the Crop Trust continued its ongoing support for Article 15 genebanks through long-term partnership agreements (LPAs) with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). In 2024, AfricaRice became eligible for an LPA, which will support its genebank's essential operations starting in 2025. These agreements cover a major portion of the annual costs of the essential operations of the collections in question.

In 2024, the Crop Trust continued to support 15 international genebanks' unique crop collections through long-term grants. These are designed to foster and support the genebanks' efforts to meet performance targets that would trigger qualification for an LPA.

In 2024, the Crop Trust also continued to enhance data management in genebanks. GRIN-Global Community Edition (GGCE) is freely accessible, open-source software that enables genebanks to optimize their internal genebank data management. Genesys is an online platform with information on millions of accessions from hundreds of genebanks. The Endowment Fund supports the development of both platforms to connect the network of genebanks digitally through data.

Goal 2: Time-bound Support for the Upgrading, Collecting and Use of Crop Diversity

The Crop Trust also provides project support for upgrading genebank facilities, conserving threatened crop diversity in genebanks and enhancing the availability of crop diversity. Thanks to the contributions by our generous donors, we continued implementing key projects:

- **Seeds for Resilience**, a project that supports national genebanks in African countries, made sound progress by planning infrastructure upgrades, providing specialized training, and implementing GGCE to improve operations and safety duplication of seed collections, including almost 1,500 accessions sent to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2024.

- **The Sweetpotato Project** continued to multiply samples of this important crop in Madagascar and Zambia and provided almost 70,000 clean vines of diverse landraces to farmers in those countries. Farmers report good yields from the project's vines, even in areas of extreme drought. Sixty-four landraces from partner countries were sent to the International Potato Center (CIP) in Lima for long-term storage, more than double the project's target.

- The 10-year **Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) project**, which began in 2021, forged ahead with capacity development of national genebanks in developing countries. A research program led by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) explored how to make crop diversity more readily accessible to farmers by ensuring that genebanks are better integrated in seed systems. Workshops in Uganda, Ecuador, Bhutan and Tanzania produced seed system assessment reports to inform pilot projects to strengthen linkages between genebanks and seed systems. BOLD partners deposited safety duplicates of their seed collections into the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

- **The BOLDER initiative**, part of the BOLD project, ramped up with stakeholder consultations in four African countries to select nutritious, climate-resilient and environment-friendly opportunity crops for conservation and promotion.

- **The Power of Diversity Funding Facility** launched with a pilot project funded by the Governments of Germany and Ireland to tap the potential of opportunity crops in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Goal 3: Increasing Global Awareness of the Importance of Crop Diversity

Under this goal, the Crop Trust aims to increase global awareness of the importance of crop diversity. This includes efforts to deepen and broaden institutional partnerships and strategic communications and outreach that elevate crop diversity on the global development agenda.

In 2024, the Crop Trust provided thought leadership with global focus and co-hosted high-level engagement at events. We joined key partnership movements such as the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils and added our voices to events in Germany, North Africa, the United States, the MENA region and more.

The Crop Diversity Day we organized with ICARDA in Rabat built on momentum from the 2023 Global Crop Diversity Summit. We launched the African Vegetable Biodiversity Rescue Plan with the World Vegetable Center at the 2024 Africa Food Systems Summit. People got a taste of the potential of opportunity crops at the Crop Trust's Food Forever experiences in New York and Des Moines. We brought the message that crop diversity is food security to the Rio Convention conferences convened by the UN in Colombia and Saudi Arabia, and hosted a dialogue on *Using Agricultural Innovation To Protect Biodiversity* with the Financial Times and CGIAR. At the Borlaug Dialogue, our first two Executive Directors – Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin OBE and Dr. Cary Fowler – were recognized as 2024 World Food Prize Laureates, and we celebrated our 20th anniversary with friends, partners and staff at the storied Villa Hammerschmidt in Bonn, Germany in November.

Strategic communications amplified these efforts. Our Crop Chronicles campaign told the stories of BOLD-project crops – potato, barley, rice and others that feed the world – with podcasts, animations and engaging narratives. The Seed Heroes series inspired through the experiences of crop conservation champions such as Nikolai Vavilov, Evangelina Villegas, Otto Frankel, Melinda Smale and many more. We showcased our partners and put a spotlight on our projects with 136 stories on our website, videos, podcasts and other content. We opened multiple avenues to engage on crop diversity across platforms in a concerted effort to spark interest and raise awareness.

Moving Forward

Looking ahead, the 2030 Strategic Plan is more than just a foundation – it is a launchpad to accelerate and expand our efforts. With this plan in place, we aim to ensure that the crop diversity in genebanks plays a central role in addressing the urgent challenges facing humanity now and into the future.

Twenty Years of the Crop Trust

The Crop Trust has made remarkable strides since its founding in 2004 as the world's only global organization solely dedicated to supporting the conservation of crop diversity in genebanks.

Looking back, our achievements can be traced to the strong foundations laid in our early years. The Endowment Fund was created in our first year to provide a sustainable, long-term financing mechanism to protect crop diversity in perpetuity. Over the past two decades, the fund has grown from almost USD 9.5 million at the end of 2004 to USD 357 million by the end of 2024.

The organization's leadership also played a crucial role in shaping its success – Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin, appointed as first Executive Director in 2004, and Dr. Cary Fowler, who took over as Executive Director in 2005. These pioneers' lifelong contributions to the conservation of crop diversity were recognized in 2024 when they were jointly awarded the prestigious World Food Prize.

Within its first three years, the fledgling organization launched the Global Crop Conservation Strategies, signed its first long-term grant with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), and initiated a massive rescue of over 240 at-risk crop collections worldwide.

Our first decade saw several major milestones. In 2008, the Crop Trust partnered with the Government of Norway to establish the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, the ultimate backup for the world's genebanks. This was followed by the 2011 launch of a global effort to safeguard and harness the diversity of the wild relatives of crops for climate change adaptation. We also created Genesys, the world's largest database of genebank collections.

Our second decade did not see us slowing down. The Food Forever Initiative was launched to promote awareness of UN Sustainable Development Goal #2 Zero Hunger. The Seeds for Resilience project partnered with five national genebanks in Africa to help build their capacity to conserve crop diversity and share it with farmers. The Templeton Pre-Breeding Project expanded the genetic diversity of grasspea and finger millet, and the BOLD project built on the success of the Crop Wild Relatives project.

Strong partnerships have been central to the Crop Trust's work. Over the past decade, long-term agreements have been signed with IRRI, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, ensuring stable funding for the bulk of the essential operations of their international genebanks. Partnerships with CGIAR through the CGIAR Research Program and Genebank Platform provided coordination and sustained financial support to 11 international genebanks, bolstering their conservation efforts.

Visionary leadership has continued to guide the Crop Trust's progress. Over the past decade, Executive Directors Marie Haga and Stefan Schmitz have pursued the organization's mission with dedication, setting a high standard for the future.

As we celebrated the Crop Trust's 20th anniversary, we reflected on two decades of remarkable achievements and looked ahead with optimism. Together with our partners, we can make the next 20 years even more transformative than our first.

Explore a detailed timeline of our history on the 20 Years of the Crop Trust page.

The Crop Trust launched with a small secretariat staff that worked hard to build the fledgling organization into a force for global good.

World Food Prize 2024

Every year, more than 800 people from over 75 countries gather in Des Moines, Iowa, USA. These decision-makers, activists, farmers, agricultural experts and students convene to discuss the challenge of securing the global food supply at the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue – and honor that year's World Food Prize laureate.

In 2024, the World Food Prize Foundation recognized two laureates, Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin OBE and Dr. Cary Fowler. Both pioneers in conserving crop diversity, they also happen to be the Crop Trust's first two Executive Directors. The Foundation recognized them "for their extraordinary leadership in preserving and protecting the world's heritage of crop biodiversity and mobilizing this critical resource to defend against threats to global food security." They were honored at a ceremony in the Iowa State Capitol Building on 31 October.

Hawtin and Fowler also played a pivotal role in establishing the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, the ultimate long-term backup repository for crop diversity.

"Early in their careers, Drs. Hawtin and Fowler realized the immense value and heritage of our crop genetic resources and dedicated their professional life to its safeguarding to secure the future of food and agriculture for the next hundred years and more," said Dr. Gebisa Ejeta, Chair of the Laureate Selection Committee and 2009 World Food Prize Laureate.

The day before the awards ceremony, the Crop Trust's current Executive Director, Stefan Schmitz, helped open the Borlaug Dialogue, which is named after the U.S. agronomist and Nobel Peace Prize winner. He shared a powerful message of crop diversity as a solution to the daily hunger that impacts 735 million people. His speech highlighted the role of genebanks in safeguarding for generations to come the diversity needed to develop new, more productive, more nutritious crops that are also better for the environment. Schmitz concluded with a call to action to invest in genebanks and work together to secure the future of food, forever.

"More than ever, crop diversity offers a lifeline to better nutrition and our survival as a species in a time defined by climate change and environmental degradation. We must secure this lifeline now and can do so with the right investments and innovations," he said.

The 2024 Borlaug Dialogue was held under the theme "Seeds of Opportunity: Bridging Generations and Cultivating Diplomacy" in honor of Dr. Borlaug's vision of global freedom from hunger. At the Dialogue, the Crop Trust organized two breakout sessions and a side event with various partners. Dr. Hawtin was the lead speaker for the session "Cultivating Collaboration: Protecting Crop Biodiversity for a Resilient Future" and the side event "The Cold Hard Facts: Clonal Crops and the Case for Cryopreservation as a Long-term Safety Backup."

"Over the past 20 years, the Crop Trust has had many successes, including its work to conserve crop wild relatives, developing invaluable information systems and signing legal agreements to support the long-term maintenance of internationally important collections of crop diversity. But there is more to do!" Dr. Hawtin said.

The Crop Trust is honored to continue our collaboration with Dr. Hawtin, who is now on our Executive Board, and Dr. Fowler. We appreciate the pioneering work that led to our establishment as an organization and congratulate them both for winning the 2024 World Food Prize.

Crop Trust Chair of the Executive Board and Executive Director congratulate 2024 World Food Prize Laureates, Dr. Cary Fowler and Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin in Des Moines.

60,000 Seed Samples Safeguarded in Svalbard

In 2024, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault marked 16 years as the world's ultimate back-up for collections of crop diversity. The community of contributors grew substantially this year, with 20 depositors shipping seeds to the remote Arctic facility for the first time.

The Seed Vault operates as a partnership among the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) and the Crop Trust. It can hold more than four million seed samples.

The February 2024 deposit featured 23 depositors – half from Africa – and added almost 14,000 seed samples to what is now the world's largest collection of crop diversity in a single location. Nine genebanks sent seeds for the first time, including depositors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and Zambia.

In May, a total of 20,720 seed samples from 15 genebanks were added to the Seed Vault. Five new depositors delivered shipments from Armenia, Benin, Indonesia and Malaysia. This second opening of the year included seeds from Indonesia's Borneo Institute, which sent rice varieties of great cultural significance to Borneo's Dayak people in their batch of 294 seed samples of rice, cowpea, eggplant and maize.

The last opening of the year in October featured more than 30,000 new seed samples from 23 depositors across 21 countries, including seven international genebanks. This was the largest number of depositors since the Seed Vault received samples from a record-setting 35 genebanks in 2020. The deposit included first-time contributions from Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chad, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Suriname.

Many of the new depositors were able to back up their seeds due to support by the BOLD project, funded by the Government of Norway. With this activity in 2024, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault now houses over 1.3 million seed samples of over 6,000 species from 123 depositors.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault located on the Norwegian island of Spitsbergen. Photo: Michael Major/Crop Trust.

A genebank technician works with a sweetpotato flower.

Programs

Towards a Global Genebank System

Long-term Support of Individual Genebanks

In 2024, the Crop Trust continued to support individual genebanks directly, as well as encouraging them to work together to strengthen the conservation of crop diversity around the world.

Through its Endowment Fund, the Crop Trust provided USD 6.2 million towards the long-term support of crop collections held by international genebanks, including those managed by CGIAR.

In 2024, AfricaRice in Côte d'Ivoire became eligible for a Long-Term Partnership Agreement, which will support its genebank's essential operations starting in 2025. The LPA with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines was renewed for another five years.

"We help international genebanks conserve the basic material that is needed for ensuring food security – the seeds," says Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs. "Without these seeds, we would not have a sustainable food system."

Meanwhile, the Joint Funding Facility established together with the International Plant Treaty provided short-term support for the essential operations of the genebanks of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), The Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) and the World Vegetable Center. It also enabled the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE) in Costa Rica to move its international coffee collection to a better site.

In late 2024, all genebanks that manage collection under Article 15 of the International Plant Treaty but are not part of CGIAR met for the first time to share knowledge and coordinate activities. The meeting was jointly organized with the International Plant Treaty Secretariat and took the decision to report its progress and status as a group to the Governing Body.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault – a crucial component of the global genebank system as the ultimate safety backup for crop diversity – also received a contribution from the Crop Trust to help fund the facility's operations.

Dr. Asif Javaid of the National Genebank of Pakistan holds rice accession 032152, which was originally developed by CAAS, IRRI, and AfricaRice. Photo: Michael Major/Crop Trust.

Genebank Data

In 2024, genebanks published data on over 4,300,000 accessions in Genesys. A total of 832 new users registered with Genesys, bringing the overall number of user accounts to 4,173.

In November, the largest-ever GOAL Data Management workshop was held in Bogotá, Colombia in collaboration with Agrosavia. It provided insights to 36 representatives from 14 organizations across 12 countries on the latest Genesys features and tools.

We also launched Spanish and French versions of Genesys. This is a major step towards making genebank data more accessible to users all over the world.

AI now makes it possible to search Genesys using natural language queries. This also works in translated versions of Genesys and can be prompted in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

The GGCE software was enhanced to support the workflows of partner genebanks, helping curators and technicians to manage collections more efficiently and effectively.

Overall, the Crop Trust is supporting 32 genebanks with the adoption and use of GGCE. The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), AfricaRice and the Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology (ICTA) in Guatemala successfully implemented the system in 2024.

"Technical and resource constraints that limit the capacity of genebanks to better manage the information about their collections and their ability to fully participate in the global system can be addressed with targeted interventions of short-term projects," says Matija Obreza, Head of Information Systems. "But the Endowment Fund underpins their long-term continuity by supporting Genesys, GGCE and our capacity-building activities."

The Crop Trust supports the management of information on crop diversity at the global scale through the online platform Genesys, and internally in genebanks with the freely accessible, open-source software GRIN-Global Community Edition (GGCE). The two systems are supported by the Crop Trust Endowment Fund, complemented with project funding and partner contributions.

Over 36 representatives from 14 organizations across 12 Latin American countries joined a Crop Trust–AGROSAVIA workshop to strengthen skills in GCGE and Genesys.

Genebank Quality and Risk Management

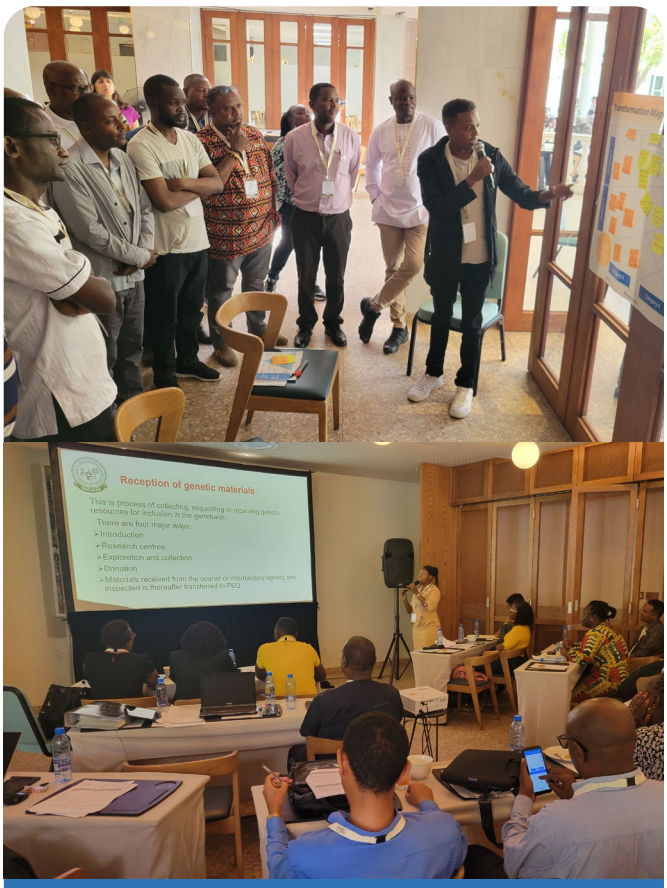
In 2024, six on-site visits by Crop Trust QMS experts, called "intensives", were organized to provide a personalized approach to learning about international standards and addressing common challenges in genebank operations. Seventy-five staff members from eight genebanks participated. This included representatives from Yemen, Sudan and Lebanon, who attended despite civil unrest in their countries.

Documenting standard operating procedures (SOP) is a critical component of QMS. These are clear, step-by-step instructions on how to carry out specific genebank tasks. In 2024, the Crop Trust assisted in developing, auditing and editing 61 SOPs across 20 genebanks.

To facilitate capacity building and enhance competence in areas such as seed science, international policy and data management, the Crop Trust offered 24 learning events. These included meetings of communities of practice, seminars, workshops and webinars. A total of 567 participants attended these events.

"Our QMS has greatly contributed to the implementation of high-quality procedures, including the distribution of materials, the security of duplicate samples and in vitro conservation," says César Tapia, the Director of the National Institute of Agricultural Research (INIAP) genebank in Ecuador. "It has optimized processes related to conservation, regeneration and documentation. These improvements have enhanced the operational efficiency of the technical staff, ensuring the conservation and integrity of Ecuador's plant genetic resources."

The Crop Trust supports national and international genebanks in establishing and enhancing quality standards. A robust quality management system (QMS) enables genebanks to deliver crop diversity and services that consistently meet users' expectations. The Crop Trust Endowment Fund funds these activities.



Partners review their standard operating procedures to ensure alignment with international standards.

Crop Conservation Strategies and the International Plant Treaty

The data, results and recommendations of the global crop conservation strategies (GCCS) contribute to the evidence base for the International Plant Treaty's work, and can also facilitate implementation of its provisions. As a result of the project's activities, the Crop Trust, the Secretariat of the International Plant Treaty and the Treaty's Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) are now looking to set up an International Technical Advisory Committee for the GCCS to help review priorities for the development of future strategies, and monitor progress in implementation.

The Crop Trust also assisted Contracting Parties to register their collections in the Multilateral System (MLS), the benefit-sharing mechanism of the International Plant Treaty. In 2024, through the technical support provided by the project, more than 12,000 accessions from three countries were notified as available in the MLS.

Morocco's national genebank, at the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), received support from the project to develop standard operating procedures to determine the MLS status of its accessions. This will allow it to register digital object identifiers (DOIs) for all its accessions in the International Plant Treaty portal and notify as available most of its Annex 1 crops.

"By developing standard operating procedures for registering MLS status, the INRA genebank ensures Morocco's invaluable genetic resources are not only preserved but can also contribute transparently and effectively to global food security and innovation under the International Plant Treaty," said Ali Sahri, Manager of INRA's genebank.

Mainstreaming the Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes is a three year project led by the Crop Trust in collaboration with the International Plant Treaty Secretariat. Launched in December 2022, the project is funded by the Government of Germany. Discover more

BOLD Action Advances Conservation and Use

The Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) project helps national genebanks safeguard crop diversity and make it available to breeders and farmers. BOLD assists pre-breeders and researchers in using the diversity in genebanks to develop new crop varieties to make smallholder farmers more resilient to climate change, thus strengthening food security and nutrition.

Capacity and Resource Development

In 2024, capacity development for national genebanks remained a central pillar of BOLD in collaboration with the CGIAR genebanks. Over 70 events targeting BOLD partners were organized throughout the year, reaching more than 500 participants. All activities, including on-site and virtual training sessions, webinars, workshops, and the provision of essential genebank equipment and supplies, were strategically designed to enhance the technical and institutional capacities of our genebank partners, ensuring they are well-equipped to manage and conserve crop diversity effectively and sustainably.

In June, BOLD partnered with the International Plant Treaty and the UN Climate Change Regional Collaboration Center Asia-Pacific to organize a workshop in Bangkok on the nexus between international policy for crop diversity conservation and climate change adaptation. This was a strategic opportunity to align genebanks with national adaptation plans (NAPs) as well as national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs). In November, a workshop was held in Dubai, enabling BOLD partners to reflect on the first phase of implementation and plan for the second.

Making New Diversity Available

BOLD supports the development and use of new diversity of seven crops by breeders and farmers for climate change adaptation and food security in 20 partner countries.

In 2024, BOLD supported Kenyan farmers in selecting 124 late blight-resistant potato varieties with traits preferred in East Africa. In Peru, the second crop wild relative-derived variety, CIP-Asiryq, was developed through participatory breeding in the High Andes. Named from a Quechua word meaning "the one who cooks fast," as well as the International Potato Center's Spanish acronym CIP, it offers excellent processing qualities, appealing flavor, and cooks 25% faster than the traditional Yungay variety. Demand also grew for CIP-Matilde, another BOLD-supported variety, both showing strong potential for processing and farmer acceptance.

Grasspea participatory evaluation field trials continued with farmers in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. In Vietnam, farmer "seed clubs" in the Mekong Delta developed the Nông dân rice variety, derived from wild rice, and received the first Plant Variety Protection Certificate under the BOLD Project, protecting their right to market and be allowed to sell the variety.

During the year, BOLD highlighted the importance of using beneficial crop diversity conserved in genebanks at many events around the world, including the German Plant Breeding Conference and the first International Lathyrus Day.

Local farmers in Morocco and Noureddine El Haddad from ICARDA evaluate CWR-derived barley and durum wheat lines with Benjamin Kilian, Manager of the Crop Trust's BOLD Project.

Participants discussed crop diversity policy and climate change adaptation at a workshop organized with the UN Climate Change RCC Asia-Pacific in Bangkok.

Genebanks and Seed Systems

An important component of BOLD led by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) focuses on how to make crop diversity more easily accessible to farmers. In 2024, research was undertaken in four countries – Bhutan, Ecuador, Tanzania and Uganda – to understand the functioning of seed systems, including the role of the national genebank.

Project launch workshops were held in all four countries with research partners and a wide range of stakeholders. NMBU and its partners co-developed the Seed Systems Toolkit, comprising a methodological framework and data collection tools. The toolkit was pre-tested in selected communities in the four countries and underwent an ethical review before being finalized and published. By the end of 2024, draft seed-system assessment reports were produced for all four countries.

Roundtable workshops with seed system actors were also held in Bhutan, Ecuador and Uganda to validate the seed system assessment findings and prepare the final reports. The research findings are used to inform the development of pilot projects for strengthening linkages between genebanks and seed systems, to be carried out in the second phase of BOLD starting in 2025.

Safety Duplication at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault

BOLD also supported regeneration of crop diversity in countries eligible for official development aid, leading to long-term safety back-up in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. By the end of 2024, almost 42,000 accessions of key crops were regenerated and almost 24,000 accessions deposited in Svalbard by 29 partners from 24 countries.

Twenty-five partners made deposits for the first time with BOLD support. These partners were not just national genebanks but also universities and local NGOs.

Beyond seed regeneration and safety duplication at two levels, partners received essential equipment and infrastructure improvements such as freezers and moisture meters that enhance storage and ensure long-term conservation of crop collections. BOLD provided critical capacity-building support. Staff, students and farmers have benefited from training programs, while seed fairs and field days fostered seed exchange and collaboration. The project has also strengthened genebank networks, expanding partnerships between national and international institutions and raising awareness of crop diversity conservation.

"The project has helped secure the germplasm conserved at the national genebank. The genbank was at the point of losing its valuable and unique germplasm, if not for the support of the Crop Trust through BOLD. The financial support came at the right time and has helped secure a thousand-plus accessions whose germination was below 50% and were not duplicated with any genebank." Dr. Nolipher Mponya, MPGRC Malawi.

The Taiwan Agricultural Research institute deposited Foxtail millet traditionally grown by Taiwan's Paiwan people into the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. Photo: Go Explore Planet.

Communications, Engagement, and Outreach

In 2024, BOLD captured the success stories of its partners around the world through images, podcasts, and videos shared with our audiences via the Crop Chronicles campaign, the Communications Community of Practice, and at a media event in Kenya. Genebank experts and the BOLD community learned about messaging, storytelling and social media reporting.

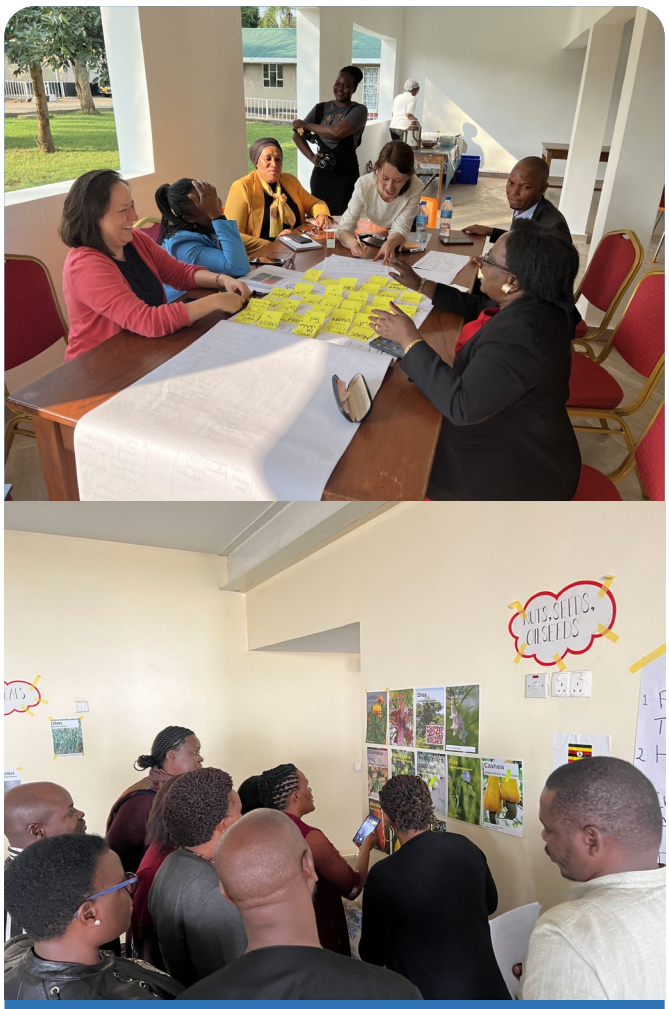
BOLDER

Building Opportunities for Lesser-known Diversity in Edible Resources (BOLDER) activities ramped up in 2024. This initiative works with partners in four African countries to enhance the conservation, production and consumption of crops that are nutritious, resilient, environment-friendly and important for local communities, but have been relatively neglected by research and development. These are also called opportunity crops.

More than 250 participants attended stakeholder meetings in Benin, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda. Through participatory exercises, stakeholders selected four opportunity crops per country, on which the BOLDER will now center its activities.

Information on these crops is provided in the Opportunity Crops Knowledge Base that BOLDER launched in December 2024. The Knowledge Base also contains around 1,500 peer-reviewed articles about the project's prioritized crops.

In addition, BOLDER partnered with Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin to announce scholarships for eight PhD positions to develop the capacity of African researchers, practitioners and food-system actors to improve the use and value of opportunity crops.



Participants evaluate different opportunity crops during the BOLDER stakeholder meetings.

Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) is a global 10-year project funded by the Government of Norway that builds on the successes of the Crop Wild Relatives Project. Discover more

Seeds for Resilience Action Grows

In 2024, Seeds for Resilience worked with partners to upgrade the physical infrastructure of their genebanks. A contract was signed with a civil engineering firm in Zambia to assess each partner's facilities and develop building plans, including the refurbishment of drying rooms. In 2025, the work will be put out to tender, and then construction will start.

As part of its capacity-building component, the project held a Genebank Operations and Advanced Learning (GOAL) workshop in Lusaka, Zambia. The workshop brought together more than 30 staff from the five countries and provided separate training to partner finance teams on how to prepare, review and respond to audits. During the year, genebank staff from Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia also received training in cryopreservation under the guidance of the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT at the Laboratory of Tropical Crop Improvement at KU Leuven in Belgium.

All partners have set up the GGCE data management software and are learning how to use it in their day-to-day operations. These operations include regenerating accessions and ensuring they are safely backed up in at least one other location. The Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) and the National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB) in Nigeria sent safety duplicates to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2024.

More than 5,200 accessions have been deposited by partners under Seeds for Resilience, with almost 1,500 seed samples sent to Svalbard in the reporting period.

Following an initial round of external reviews in 2019, a second round was completed in 2024. These involved expert teams visiting each country to check on progress and make recommendations about the way forward.

"This [project] was my dream of how a genebank can work directly with farmers. It's a great model because it makes sure that the materials don't just lie in the genebanks like museums," said Peterson Wambugu, Genetic Resources Research Institute (GeRRi) in Kenya.

Farmers from the Naransaag community in Ghana's Upper East Region weed young Bambara groundnut. Photo: Neil Palmer/Crop Trust

Since 2019, **Seeds for Resilience** has supported the national genebanks of Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia. Scheduled to end in 2024, it was extended to 2026. It is supported by the Federal Government of Germany (BMZ), through the German Development Bank (KfW).
Discover more

Sweetpotato Success Story

In 2024, the Sweetpotato project successfully facilitated transfer of 64 landraces to CIP's headquarters in Lima, Peru for long-term storage from Madagascar and Zambia under the rules of the International Plant Treaty, greatly exceeding the project target of 30 landraces. Without this initiative, many sweetpotato landraces unique to these countries would not have been safely conserved and made available to the world.

Twenty-nine landraces have been selected based on uniqueness and are undergoing processing in CIP-Lima for cryopreservation. Clean landraces have been sent to CIP's facilities in Nairobi, Kenya, where they will be maintained through the end of the project.

In Madagascar, 24,350 clean vines from repatriated landraces were distributed to farmers, and 44,750 vines were provided to farmers in Zambia. Another distribution of clean vines to farmers is scheduled before the end of the project.

Farmer surveys have documented favorable comments, with participants excited by increased yields from clean and healthy sweetpotato vines obtained through the project, even in areas hit by severe drought.

"Farmers in Zambia and Madagascar are seeing improved yields from using disease-free planting materials of their landraces," says Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs at the Crop Trust. "Despite the drought, some landraces are performing well. Farmers have also benefited from training by local partners on maintaining plants free of diseases in their fields."

Funded by the UK's Darwin Initiative and coordinated by the Crop Trust, **Sweetpotato: A Model for Food Security and Long-term Conservation of Biodiversity** aims to collect, clean, and conserve unique sweetpotato landraces from Madagascar and Zambia. Working with the International Potato Center (CIP), the Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI), and Fiompiana Fambolena Malagasy Norvéziana (FIFAMANOR), the project returns disease-free planting material to farmers and ensures long-term conservation through cryopreservation. The project will end in 2025. Discover more

Women farmers in Madagascar's Vakinankaratra region grow and conserve at least five sweetpotato varieties each, preserving crucial crop diversity.

Getting Genebanks Back Up on Their Feet

The journey of safeguarding crop diversity is a long and challenging one, with emergencies bound to arise – moments when genebanks face the dire risk of losing irreplaceable collections. In 2024, the Crop Trust and the International Plant Treaty stepped in to address such critical situations in Sudan and the Philippines, allocating over USD 90,000 through the collaboratively managed Emergency Reserve for Genebanks.

In Sudan, ongoing armed conflict severely endangered national food systems and the country's agricultural legacy. Amid looming famine and crumbling infrastructure, the national genebank at the Agricultural Plant Genetic Resources Conservation and Research Centre embarked on the arduous task of surviving. This facility safeguards over 17,000 accessions, including indigenous crop wild relatives, some of which were safety duplicated at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. To assist, the Emergency Reserve provided funds to install a solar power system at the sub-national genebank in Elobeid for stable and independent energy access. The BOLD Project provided additional funds to pack seed samples, arrange transfer to the Port of Sudan, and shipment of seeds to Norway in 2024. NordGen helped prepare them for deposit into the Seed Vault.

In the Philippines, the National Plant Genetic Resources Laboratory (NPGRL) faced escalating challenges due to extreme weather events. With an average of 20 typhoons annually and a history of destructive floods and fires, the lab operated for years without a reliable backup power system. This put its collection of over 20,000 accessions at constant risk. In 2024, the Emergency Reserve committed funding to support the installation of a power generator and freezers. These enhancements ensure that the country's national repository for traditional and Indigenous varieties – many of which can no longer be found in the field – remains resilient against future storms and outages.

"If these crops vanish from the field, what alternatives would we have if they aren't conserved? There's no going back," noted Hidelisa de Chavez, a researcher at NPGRL.

Established jointly by the Secretariat of the International Plant Treaty and the Crop Trust in 2021, **the Emergency Reserve for Genebanks** provides a funding mechanism that can respond rapidly whenever there is an imminent threat to collections of crop diversity that fall under the framework of the International Plant Treaty. The Emergency Reserve is a component of the BOLD Project. Discover more

A new power generator installed at NPGRL with support from the Emergency Reserve for Genebanks strengthens the genebank's ability to safeguard thousands of seed samples for the future. Photo: NPGRL

A grasspea flower at ICARDA in Morocco.

External Affairs

External Affairs

The External Affairs team works on resource mobilizvation, partnership building, event coordination and communications.

The year 2024 was very successful for the Crop Trust's resource mobilization, with more than USD 60m provided by key donors for our vital work to secure the world's food supply now and into the future. In light of current uncertainties regarding support for crop diversity, a key global good, the USD 37m contributed to our Endowment Fund by Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States this year represents a very significant investment in our mission, and a powerful message.

Crop diversity also received important global recognition in 2024. Executive Director Stefan Schmitz delivered a keynote address to open the Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, where our first two Executive Secretaries were honored with the 2025 World Food Prize. Moreover, as an observer organization at the G20 Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists, we deepened collaboration with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) and contributed to the G7 Development Ministers' statement recognizing the importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Our engagement focused on global platforms showcasing the irreplaceable contribution crop diversity makes to achieving sustainable development. Highlights included a panel at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin and collaboration with the food industry at a Special Event with the International Plant Treaty. During the Borlaug Dialogue, we co-hosted a session on cryopreservation with CGIAR and CIP, joined the UK Science and Innovation Initiative to discuss protecting crop diversity and explored how to save vegetable biodiversity globally with the World Vegetable Center. We also held a Food Forever Experience in Des Moines spotlighting opportunity crops, a successful follow-up to a Food Forever tasting event during New York Climate Week.

In addition, we contributed to the three United Nations Rio Convention Conferences:

- At the COP16 UN Biodiversity Conference in Cali, we co-hosted a panel on intercultural approaches to mainstreaming agrobiodiversity in food systems, and a high-level breakfast and Financial Times Live event.
- For COP29 in Baku, we ran a digital campaign on resilient food systems with UN Climate Change.
- At the COP16 UN Desertification Conference in Riyadh, we announced that the Crop Trust will host the Secretariat of the new Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security, which will bring together governments, researchers, and private sector partners to support sustainable and diverse agri-food systems in drylands.

Alongside this global advocacy work, we also worked with key partners to amplify awareness and support for crop diversity as a food security solution at local and regional levels. This included a public lecture and press event at the Deutsches Museum in Munich and a Crop Diversity Day in Rabat, co-hosted with ICARDA. We also supported global date palm conservation through an MOU with the Khalifa Award and hosted a fireside chat with the OPEC Fund at the margins of the UNCCD COP16.

Always interested in supporting the conservation of neglected and underutilized crops, the Crop Trust became an official VACS Implementer alongside CGIAR,

Simon Mundy of the Financial Times joined Stefan Schmitz for an FT Live event featuring representatives from Lloyds Banking Group, The Nature Conservancy, CGIAR, and The Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

the FAO and IFAD. Building on the political momentum and interest around "opportunity crops", we launched the African Vegetable Biodiversity Rescue Plan with the World Vegetable Center at the Africa Food Systems Forum, and the Power of Diversity Funding Facility with initial support from Germany and Ireland. We also advanced the BOLDER initiative in four African countries as part of our Norway-funded BOLD project. These activities reinforce the role that diversity of even crops that are not global commodity staples can and should play in securing our current and future nutrition.

We are deeply grateful to all our donors and partners. Your support ensures that our mission to safeguard crop diversity as a foundation of global food and nutritional security remains strong – and endures.

In 2024, the Crop Trust's communications team amplified our thought leadership, worked with partnerships and events teams to expand global outreach and showcased the power of crop diversity across multiple platforms. Our efforts centered on compelling storytelling, strategic media engagement and content designed for today's digital landscape.

The croptrust.org website served as a primary hub for this, featuring 136 new stories, videos and other content during the year. Highlights included our Crop Chronicles and Seed Heroes campaigns – deep dives into the crops that nourish the world and the people safeguarding their diversity. Crop Chronicles featured podcasts and multimedia animations to engage diverse audiences, while Seed Heroes told powerful personal stories of global leaders in crop diversity conservation and use.

On social media, these stories were adapted for key platforms. We worked hard to keep our partners in focus. This helped increase reach and engagement throughout the year:

- LinkedIn – Nearly 1 million impressions, 47,000 clicks, and 5,903 new followers, reflecting strong interest from a professional audience.
- Facebook – Over 17 million impressions and 600,000 clicks, making it the top driver of traffic to our website. Gained 4,831 new fans, with high engagement—270,000+ reactions. Video posts performed best.
- X/Twitter – 500,000 impressions, strong engagement with likes and reposts, and 2,676 new followers, showing continued relevance and reach.
- Instagram – Reached 13.5 million impressions, nearly 12,000 likes, and added 2,432 new followers, maintaining steady growth and visual engagement.
- Dish Newsletter – This monthly engagement platform added 189 interested stakeholders in 2024.

Executive Director Stefan Schmitz speaks at the Building a Resilient Future: Conserving Crop Diversity Through the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils panel.

Our media presence also grew, with significant coverage across leading international outlets. Highlights included:

- *The New York Times, Bloomberg* and *Reuters* spotlighted new seed deposits at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.
- *The Guardian, The Africa Report* and *Food Tank* explored the latest developments in crop diversity conservation and use in Africa.
- *El País, Devex* and *Forbes* covered broader aspects of our mission and impact.

Throughout the year, the communications team supported outreach by the Executive Director and senior leadership, elevated the work of our partners and donors, and opened new avenues for global engagement. We also welcomed a new Chief Communications Officer, who brings fresh vision and energy to strengthen the Crop Trust brand and further elevate our voice in the global food systems conversation.

As we continue to grow our visibility and partnerships, communications will remain central to our strategy to secure crop diversity for future generations.

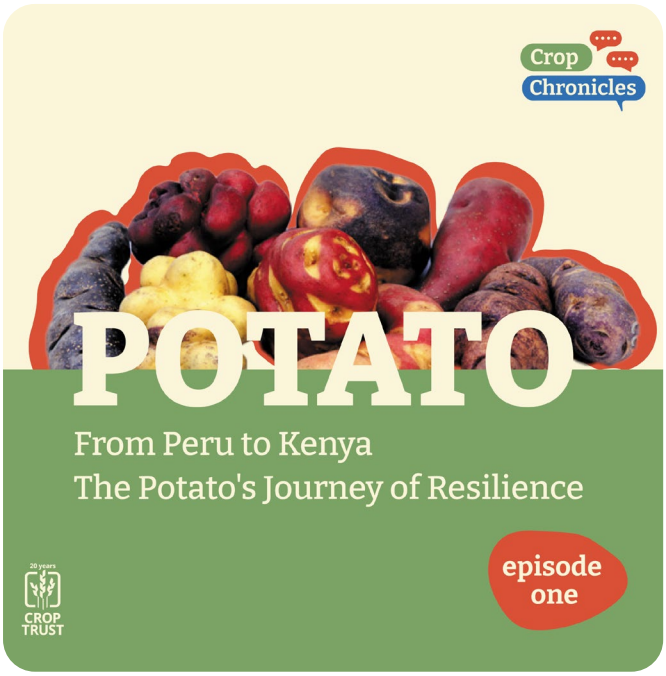
Crops and Leaders in Focus

Crop Chronicles

In 2024, the Crop Trust launched Crop Chronicles, a multimedia series on the importance of seven crops in global agriculture – alfalfa, barley, durum wheat, finger millet, grasspea, potato and rice.

The series began in May and featured one crop each month, telling the story of the people who grow them and the race to make them more resilient in the face of emerging challenges. Stories were published on the Crop Trust website along with a short, animated video and a podcast on Spotify. Links to related Crop Trust news articles allowed readers to dig deeper.

Among the many facts and figures, readers discovered how gladiators in ancient Rome ate barley to build their energy for fighting. They learned that Greek soldiers discovered green expanses of alfalfa after defeating the invading Persian army at Marathon in 490 BCE and that the Queen of Sheba is rumored to have taken grasspea home to Ethiopia after visiting King Solomon. They also met the farmer scientists of Vietnam whose rice is now being grown in the Mekong Delta.



The featured crops are the focus of the pre-breeding and evaluation activities of the Crop Trust's 10-year BOLD project. BOLD has engaged 20 genebanks in developing countries to help identify useful traits so breeders can produce more resilient and nutritious varieties. Crop Chronicles share why it is so important we ensure these crops are fit for the future.

Discover all seven stories on the Crop Chronicles - BOLD Project page. Visit the Crop Trust Podcasts page to listen to each podcast.

Seed Heroes

As we marked our 20th anniversary, the Crop Trust embarked on a special campaign to tell the stories of Seed Heroes. These remarkable individuals from the past and present have dedicated their lives to conserving crop diversity and promoting food security.

Throughout 2024, we published monthly profiles of different Seed Heroes whose careers shaped the landscape of crop diversity conservation and use. The stories highlighted the outstanding work of scientists, advocates and leaders from the fields of genebank management and plant breeding. Sharing these stories showcased the history of conserving crop diversity and how we can use it to secure the future of food. We also hoped to inspire the next generation of scientists to carry on this work.

The 12-part series paid tribute to many eminent figures, living and deceased. We profiled heroes such as: Nikolai Vavilov, the "father of genebanks"; Cary Fowler and Geoffrey Hawtin, winners of the 2024 World Food Prize; and Melinda Smale, a Michigan State University professor who explores the economic value of crop diversity conservation.

Readers also learned how Moroccan scientist Ahmed Amri helped rescue ICARDA's genebank during Syria's civil war. They found out how Carlos Ochoa escaped from thieves who tried to kill him by rolling boulders down a mountainside in Peru during his collection expedition, and how Mexican scientist Evangelina Villegas co-developed a new variety of protein-building maize that improved

the diets of millions of malnourished people around the world.

The campaign enjoyed the active input of living Seed Heroes, who contributed time and effort to ensure the accuracy of their story and timeline. We are grateful to each of them for their help and interest in the series.

The Seed Heroes pantheon includes five women who reached the pinnacle of a traditionally male-dominated profession, often overcoming significant challenges in their careers. The Crop Trust salutes their dedication to securing our agricultural legacy and ensuring global food security.

We encourage you to explore the inspiring stories of struggle, triumph and lasting impact in our Seed Heroes series. They illustrate the path to success in the lives of crop diversity icons and should provide motivation and hope for the next generation of scientists interested in feeding the world.

Explore the series on our Seed Heroes - Crop Trust page.

An ear of wheat as seen from above, taken during a field visit to ICARDA in Syria.

Administration

Crop Trust Operations

In 2024, the Crop Trust's corporate operations team focused on building staff capacity and improving processes to enable the organization to function more efficiently and effectively.

The size and diversity of our organization grew over the year. The 50 people working at the Crop Trust at the end of the year represented 26 nationalities, with 61% of staff identifying as women and 39% as men. Under the newly launched corporate Internship Program, two interns served for six months each to support the External Affairs and Programs teams respectively.

A corporate Gender Diversity and Inclusion (GDI) learning initiative was launched jointly by HR and the GDI Committee of the organization. The initiative provided all staff with access to an online training course, complemented by five face-to-face sessions. An on-site two-day leadership and management training session was also provided to all staff with supervisory responsibility. This included a Myers-Briggs Type Indicator assessment of all participants and a 360-degree assessment of all Executive Committee members.

During the year, a new cloud-based performance management system was selected and customized for the organization's needs. Implementation will be completed in 2025.

The procurement process for consultants was streamlined to ensure that both categories of service providers – individual consultants and companies – are governed by the same policies and procedures.

The Crop Trust banner flies outside our headquarters in Bonn.

Finance and Investments

Endowment Fund at a Glance

The Crop Diversity Endowment Fund lies at the heart of the Crop Trust's work. It provides a sustainable, long-term funding mechanism for protecting crop diversity in perpetuity. The Crop Trust invests contributions in diversified financial instruments to generate sufficient returns for this purpose. Each year, a portion of the return (up to 4% of the fund's average market value over the previous twelve quarters) is withdrawn and used to ensure that crop diversity held in key genebanks is effectively conserved and made available for use.

The year 2024 was successful for the Endowment Fund, with its value rising from USD 305 million to USD 357 million. This increase was due to both new contributions from donors and strong investment returns in the capital market. Investment gains, net of fees, amounted to USD 22 million, a return of 7.3% for the year.

The Crop Trust received a record USD 37.7 million for the endowment in 2024, thanks to the support of our donors – the Governments of Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, along with Groupe Limagrain and the 2024 World Food Prize Laureates Dr. Cary Fowler and Dr. Geoffery Hawtin.

Climate Disclosures Report

The Crop Trust produced its first Climate Disclosures Report in 2024, prepared in line with the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures. This report provides insight into how the organization integrates climate considerations into its fiduciary duty, with specific focus on the emissions of the Endowment Fund investment portfolio. By analyzing these emissions, we can proactively identify emerging risks before they cause a material impact. Furthermore, this approach enables us to seize opportunities that arise as social, economic and regulatory landscapes evolve, reinforcing our commitment to responsible investment and a climate-safe future.

Concessional Loan

In 2017, the Crop Trust received a EUR 50 million concessional loan from the German Development Bank, KfW. By the end of 2024, total capital repayments amounted to EUR 12 million, leaving a remaining balance of EUR 38 million. The funds are held in a euro investment fund with a market value of EUR 41.8 million (USD 43.3 million) at year-end. This fund also had a positive year, generating a 6% return in 2024.

Financial Results

In 2024, the Crop Trust continued to demonstrate solid financial stability, with total revenues amounting to USD 51 million, up from USD 19 million in the previous year. Total expenditure was USD 21.8 million, of which USD 18.2 million was for program activities to provide both long-term and time-bound support to preserve and use the world's most important collections of crop diversity. This excludes the impact of financial operations, such as the revaluation of accounts held in foreign currencies.

In addition, USD 1.3 million was used to increase global awareness of crop diversity's importance while broadening institutional partnerships. Administration-related expenditure amounted to USD 2.4 million, reflecting the operational costs necessary to support the effective implementation of our mission and programs, including management, governance, information technology and facilities maintenance.

Financial Support

The Crop Trust would like to thank all individuals and institutions that made financial contributions to the organization in 2024, for a total of USD 61 million.

The following donors provided funding above USD 25,000 during the year:

- Dr. Cary Fowler
- Dr. Geoffrey Hawtin OBE
- European Commission, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)
- Germany, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), through a project led by the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE)

- Germany, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through a project led by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- Germany, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), through projects led by KfW Development Bank (KFW)
- Groupe Limagrain
- Inter-American Development Bank
- Ireland, Development Cooperation and Africa Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs (Irish Aid)
- Norway, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- United Kingdom, Darwin Initiative
- United Kingdom, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)
- United States of America, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Financial Audit

The financial statements of the Crop Trust for the year ended 31 December 2024 were prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and audited by PriceWaterhouseCoopers GmbH Wirtschaftsprüfungsgesellschaft (PwC).

The full Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report are available on the Crop Trust website.

Statement of Financial Position

	2024 (USD'000)	2023 (USD'000)
Current Asset	41,077	29,302
Non-Current Assets	400,299	355,145
Total Assets	**441,376**	**384,447**
Current Liabilities	29,616	17,549
Non-Current Liabilities	39,654	47,616
Total Liabilities	**69,270**	**65,165**
Unrestricted Net Asset	11,398	11,858
Permanently Restricted Net Asset	360,708	307,424
Total Net Assets	***372,106***	***319,282***
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	***441,376***	***384,447***

Income and Expenditure

	2024 (USD'000)	2023 (USD'000)
Income from Crop Trust Resources	10,122	8,410
Donor Grants	528	1,183
Project Income	12,130	10,859
Total Income	**22,780**	**20,452**
Genebank Grants	6,509	5,632
Coordination & System-wide Support	1,306	1,287
Total Genebank Support Expenditures	7,815	6,919
Project Expenditures	11,269	9,698
Partnerships & Communications Expenditures	1,300	1,373
Administration Expenditures	2,396	2,462
Total Expenditures	**22,780**	**20,452**

Leadership and Governance

Members of the Executive Board

- Catherine Bertini, Chair of the Executive Board
- Mercedes Aráoz, Vice-Chair of the Executive Board
- Carlos Furche, Executive Board Member
- Jean-Christophe Gouache, Executive Board Member
- Geoffrey Hawtin OBE, Executive Board Member (joined January 2024)
- Dagfinn Høybråten, Executive Board Member
- Masaru Iwanaga, Executive Board Member
- Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Executive Board Member (joined March 2024)
- Josette Lewis, Executive Board Member (joined January 2024)
- Joachim von Braun, Executive Board Member
- Stefan Schmitz, Executive Board Member, Ex-officio
- Kaveh Zahedi, Executive Board Member (non-voting), FAO Representative (joined March 2024)
- Juan-Lucas Restrepo, Executive Board Member (non-voting), CGIAR Representative (joined August 2024)

Members of the Executive Committee

- Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director
- Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs
- Jaspreet Stamm, Director of External Affairs
- Anne Clyne, Director of Administration
- Luigi Guarino, Chief Scientist
- Christoph Beck, Chief of Human Resources & Corporate Operations

External Members of Executive Board Subsidiary Committees

- Victoria Sant, Chair of the Investment Committee
- Alex Readey, Member of the Investment Committee
- Stephan von Stenglin, Member of the Investment Committee
- Steven Lainoff, Member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACSU	Ad Hoc Technical Committee on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
ADRON	Anne van Dijk Rice Research Centre
AGRF	African Food Systems Forum
AUC	African Union Commission
BMEL	German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
BOLD	Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development
BOLDER	Building Opportunities for Lesser-known Diversity in Edible Resources
CCOP	Communications Community of Practice
CePaCT	Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CIAT	International Center for Tropical Agriculture
CIFOR-ICRAF	Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry
CIP	International Potato Center
COP	Conference of the Parties
CWR	Crop Wild Relatives
EBI	Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute
EUR	Euros
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIFAMANOR	Fiompiana Fambolena Malagasy Norvéziana
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
GB10	10th session of the Governing Body of the International Plant Treaty
GBP	British pound sterling
GCCS	Global Crop Conservation Strategies
GDI	Gender, Diversity and Inclusion
GeRRI	Genetic Resources Research Institute
GGCE	GRIN-Global Community Edition
GGP	Global Genebank Partnership
GLIS	Global Information System
GOAL	Genebank Operations and Advanced Learning
IAES	Independent Advisory and Evaluation Service
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
INRA	National Institute for Agricultural Research
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
KEPHIS	Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
LPAs	Long-Term Partnership Agreements
NACGRAB	National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology
NAFRI	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
NENA	Near East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NMBU	Norwegian University of Life Sciences
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NordGen	Nordic Genetic Resource Center
NPGRC	National Plant Genetic Resources Centre
NUS	Neglected and Underutilized Species
PDFF	Power of Diversity Funding Facility
PGRFA	Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PGRRI	Plant Genetic Resources Research Institute
PwC	PriceWaterhouseCoopers
QMS	Quality Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFR	Seeds for Resilience
SOPs	standard operating procedures
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States dollar(s)
WorldVeg	World Vegetable Center
ZARI	Zambia Agricultural Research Institute

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