



Minutes of the 28th Meeting of the Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

13 November 2023

The Donors' Council of the Global Crop Diversity Trust ('Crop Trust') met on 13 November 2023 in Berlin, Germany, including a hybrid-virtual participation via videoconference. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Daniel van Gilst, Vice-Chair of the Donors' Council, Norway in lieu of the Chair being unable to attend the meeting in person. The meeting was attended by representatives of donors, multilateral partners and members of the Crop Trust Secretariat. A list of those in attendance can be found in Annex 1. Annex 2 shows the meeting agenda. Several background documents were circulated to invitees prior to the meeting.

1. Welcome

Mr. HwangYong Kim, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council, attending virtually, welcomed meeting participants and thanked them for their attendance. Mr. Kim expressed his gratitude to Mr. Daniel van Gilst, Vice-Chair of the Donors' Council, for chairing the session in light of Dr. Kim's in person absence.

2. Introduction and Adoption of the Agenda and Approval of Minutes from the 27th Meeting

The Vice-Chair opened the meeting and called for the adoption of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the 27th meeting of the Donors' Council, held 27 April 2023. The meeting agenda was adopted and the minutes from the 27th meeting approved.

3. Update from the Executive Director

The Executive Director of the Crop Trust, Mr. Stefan Schmitz, began his remarks by recognizing the importance of continued cooperation between the Crop Trust and CGIAR. Referencing earlier conversations held during the October 2023 CGIAR System Council Meeting in Rabat, Morocco, the Executive Director acknowledged the need to communicate clearly with the CGIAR and its donors regarding the Crop Trust's endowment support to CGIAR genebanks.

The Executive Director shared an overview of the Crop Trust's 2030 strategy which is underpinned by three goals: long-term funding for the essential operations of all Article 15 collections and additional international genebanks holding unique collections,



time-bound support for upgrading facilities and increasing the availability of crop diversity to farmers, breeders, and researchers, and significantly increasing the global awareness of the importance of crop diversity.

The Executive Director highlighted new contributions to the endowment in 2022 from the United States, New Zealand, and Limagrain totalling USD 8.5 million. The European Commission also contributed a grant of USD 1 million, defraying operating withdrawals from the endowment to be used for genebank operations instead.

Despite market fluctuations, the endowment continues to grow, helping to ensure continued support to CGIAR and other international genebanks. The Executive Director stressed that additional endowment contributions, anticipated through the Crop Trust's fundraising campaign, will directly fund long-term genebank support.

Donors' Council members discussed the importance of funding the CGIAR Genebank Initiative and the Crop Trust's role in this funding. Mr. André Zandstra, Global Director of Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization, CGIAR, explained that the funding gap between what the Crop Trust is able to provide and the full cost of the Genebank Initiative is made up by CGIAR pooled funding. However, Mr. Zandstra noted that this places a strain on CGIAR, particularly as it refers to research funding that may be impacted.

Donors' Council members discussed the challenge of acquiring new endowment funding and welcomed the Crop Trust to also explore other potential funding avenues in parallel. The Executive Director responded by welcoming increased bilateral funding to Crop Trust operational costs to offset endowment withdrawals and cited other fundraising avenues like the recent endowment contribution from the Bezos Earth Fund as part of a larger research grant to the CGIAR.

Various Donors' Council members expressed perspectives on the Crop Trust's budget, as briefly presented in the Executive Director's opening presentation. Several Donors' Council members inquired about the budget allocations of endowment withdrawals as they relate to the operational costs of the secretariat, including External Affairs expenses, such as resource mobilization and communications.

The Executive Director thanked Donors' Council members for expressing their concerns and emphasized that the majority of endowment withdrawals goes directly to genebank operations. The Executive Director explained that the current level of spending towards External Affairs is necessary in order to meet the significant fundraising goals of the organization and achieve necessary funding targets that ultimately provide in perpetuity funding for CGIAR and other international genebank collections.



Mr. Daniel van Gilst, Vice-Chair of the Donors' Council, agreed to report on the discussions of the Donor's Council at the upcoming Executive Board meeting of the Crop Trust.

4. Fundraising for a Hungry World: Lead up to COP28

Mr. Zandstra began his presentation by recognizing the intrinsic link between CGIAR and the Crop Trust in their histories, mandates, goals, and donor prospects. He acknowledged the need for close coordination and praised the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions.

CGIAR has a vested interest in the success of the Crop Trust endowment and Mr. Zandstra reiterated the importance of expanded funding to the Crop Trust whether that be through endowment contributions, increasing bilateral funding in order to defer endowment withdrawals, or other innovative methods. Mr. Zandstra invited the Crop Trust to officially communicate baseline commitments for the 2025-2027 funding cycle and collaborate on ensuring that donors have a clear picture on how best to support both institutions. Mr. Zandstra closed by describing the growing political awareness of the importance of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and called on everyone to help both institutions take full advantage of the opportunity.

The Executive Director committed to communicating such a baseline level of support for 2025-2027 and reminded the Donors' Council that this baseline would be a minimum and will grow as the Crop Trust expands its endowment.

5. The Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS): Building Resilience through Diversity

Dr. Simone Passarelli, Policy Advisor, Office of Global Food Security, US State Department, introduced the VACS initiative by recognizing increasing rates of global hunger and the threat posed to global crop yields by climate change. To reverse this trend, the US State Department has partnered with the FAO and the African Union (among other partners) to provide funding necessary to boost agricultural productivity and nutrition through the development of diverse, climate-resilient crop varieties and the building of healthy soils.

Dr. Passarelli emphasized the importance of healthy soils and underutilized crops as critical in combating food security globally. Dr. Passarelli also underlined that VACS is a vision rather than a specific project and so there is a desire to work with a wide range of actors and, in the future, expand to geographic areas outside of Africa.

Dr. Passarelli reported that there has already been USD 100 million announced in funding, 30 million of which will go to CGIAR. VACS has completed Phase 1 identification



of critical crops in the region and will continue to develop opportunity profiles to better understand how to prioritize the crops shortlisted in Phase 1 of the project. Attention must also be paid to balancing nutritional benefits and climate resilience when developing new varieties.

The Plant Treaty noted that not all the crops listed as potential targets by VACS fall under benefit sharing agreements. The Treaty inquired as to how VACS aimed to take this into account as well as deal with other hurdles in international policy.

Dr. Passarelli responded that the State Department is working very closely with national breeding programs, the CGIAR, and the Plant Treaty to help overcome these obstacles.

Mr. Michael Keller, International Seed Federation, reminded the Donors' Council of the importance of seed systems within food systems and inquired on the position of the private sector within VACS.

Dr. Passarelli noted that many of the target crops VACS seeks to improve don't have breeding programs or a seed system and that many won't attract interest from major private sector breeders. Instead, VACS will need to rely on smaller consortiums of breeders.

6. Finance and Investment Report

Anne Clyne, Director of Business Operations in transition, reported on investment management, the revised 2023 annual budget, and the multi-year 2024-2026 budget to the Council. Ms. Clyne informed the Council that, as of 30 September 2023, the endowment was valued at USD 290.2 million. The year-to-date performance was 4%, against a benchmark of 6.8%. Ms. Clyne explained that the endowment was highly diversified and described the specifics of each asset class the endowment is invested in. The Donors' Council was also informed about the status of the EUR 50 million KfW concessional loan. The fund had a market value of EUR 45.1 million following repayments of EUR 4.8 million as at September 30, 2023. No income withdrawal is planned from this portfolio at the moment as a prudent approach is necessary for safeguarding these funds.

Ms. Clyne noted the Crop Trust's commitment to sustainable investing, detailed in its Sustainable Investment Framework, highlighting the Crop Trust's commitment to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), along with its feedback on the draft Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). Ms. Clyne added that the Crop Trust's Investment Committee recently carried out a deep dive on its sustainable investing, looking in particular at its potential impact on investment returns. They concluded that the investment portfolio has not been materially affected by its sustainable investment



objectives and that they believe the portfolio has the right balance between risk/return and sustainable investment outcomes.

Ms. Clyne presented the revised 2023 annual budget which includes new long-term funding agreements with IITA, CIAT, World Veg, and SPC-CePaCT. The Donors' Council was also alerted to new funding agreements with the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture to advance new crop conservation strategies and with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation to add a new work package to the ongoing BOLD project.

In discussing the 2024-2026 multi year budget, Ms. Clyne noted the conclusion of the European Commission annual grant and the Crop Trust 2.0 project while announcing a projected increase in fundraising campaign activities and a new long-term funding agreement with Africa Rice. Ms. Clyne reported that expenditure in future years was expected to remain stable, thereby allowing increases to the endowment to provide funding that would go directly to genebanks.

Ms. Clyne noted that the Crop Trust tendered for a new auditor in 2022. PwC was selected and their appointment for 2023-2025 is up for approval by the Executive Board at its next meeting.

Sweden inquired as to whether the endowment structure has been reviewed lately. Ms. Clyne explained that the fund was reviewed two years ago and will be reviewed again in the coming year.

7. Science and Project Update

Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs, delivered an update on Crop Trust programs and technical work. This included updates on BOLD, Seeds for Resilience, Crop Conservation Strategies, the Darwin Initiative project, and the Crop Trust's technical assistance, through system-wide services, in ensuring the conservation and availability of plant genetic resources.

The Director of Programs began by highlighting two new long-term partnership (LPA) agreements with the IITA and CIAT genebanks, a long-term grant (LTG) for the World Vegetable Centre's Tanzania genebank, and a planned LTG with Africa Rice in 2024. The Director of Programs also noted increased funding for CePaCT from a contribution by New Zealand, transitional support for ICRAF, continued support to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, three genebank reviews at CePaCT, IRRI and World Vegetable Centre (both Tanzania and Taiwan genebanks), and the rescue and relocation of the CATIE coffee collection in partnership with the Plant Treaty as examples of the Crop Trust's efforts to support the international genebank system.



The Director of Programs highlighted achievements in the Crop Trust's system-wide services, which provided support to genebanks on genebank quality management and continued work on genebank information systems such as Genesys.

The Director of Programs updated the Donors' Council on the progress of the BOLD, Seeds for Resilience, Crop Conservation Strategies, and Darwin Initiative project, highlighting key achievements from each.

The German Ministry of Food and Agriculture informed the Donors' Council that it had elected to extend funding for the Crop Conservation Strategies project through 2025.

The German Development Bank (KfW) inquired about the objectives and project partners of the additional work package being added to BOLD. To which Dr. Krishnan reported that specific crops have yet to be selected, but would be aligned with VACS. The work package will focus on establishing participatory breeding and selection programs that allow farmers and other stakeholders to contribute to the species/variety selection process as well as assist in the development of value-chains for the underutilized crops targeted. At the request of the United States, the Director of Programs clarified that Ghana, Tanzania, Benin, and Uganda would be the target countries for the added work package.

8. Appointments of Executive Board Members and the Re-Appointment of the Donors' Council Vice-Chair

After the expiration of the Executive Board seats of Ms. Emmy Simmons of the United States and Mr. Bernhard Lehmann of Switzerland two nominations were required.

The United States nominated Ms. Josette Lewis to replace Ms. Simmons and the United Kingdom nominated Mr. Geoff Hawtin to replace Mr. Lehmann. The Vice-Chair asked the Donors' Council to move by consensus to appoint Ms. Lewis and Mr. Hawtin to the Crop Trust Executive Board for three-year terms (2024-2026). Their appointments were confirmed.

Mr. Daniel van Gilst, Vice-Chair of the Donors' Council, concluded his initial two year term at the end of 2023. The Kingdom of Norway nominated Mr. van Gilst for reappointment to a three year term as Vice-Chair. With no dissent, Mr. Daniel van Gilst was reappointed as Vice-Chair for a three year term (2024-2026).

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

The Vice-Chair reiterated the discussions regarding the use of endowment funds for operational costs of the Secretariat. As a next step, the Vice-Chair noted his intention to



relay these perspectives to the Executive Board for discussion at the Board meeting immediately following the Donors' Council meeting.

The Vice-Chair thanked the presenters and reiterated the need for continued cooperation between CGIAR, the Plant Treaty, and the Crop Trust.

As a final question, Mr. Michael Keller, International Seed Federation, requested information on the Global Crop Diversity Summit.

The Executive Director responded by describing the Summit as an opportunity for partners, NGOs, and civil institutions to come together to discuss the challenges of food security and biodiversity loss and empower genebanks to meet these challenges. Dr. Schmitz explained that the Summit is a starting point for the construction of a global network of crop diversity preservation.

Annex 1: List of Participants

Affiliation	Name	Role
Australia, DFAT	Fiona Lynn (Virtual)	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	Neil Watkins	Deputy Director, Global Policy and Advocacy
Brazil	Mariana Marshall Parra (Virtual)	Alternate Permanent Representative of Brazil to FAO, WFP, and IFAD
Brazil, Embrapa	Aluana Abreu (Virtual)	Researcher
CGIAR	André Zandstra	Global Director of Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization
Egypt	Niveen Abdel Fattah Hassan (Virtual)	National Gene Bank, Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
European Commission	Darrell Sexstone (Virtual)	Policy Officer, Directorate for International Partnerships
Germany, GIZ	Stefan Kachelriess-Matthess	Advisor, Development Cooperation
Germany, GIZ	Joachim Langbein	Project Manager
Germany, BMZ	Felicitas Röhrig	Senior Policy Advisor
Germany, BMEL	Imke Thormann	Advisor
Germany, KfW	Carolin Kremheller	Portfolio Manager
International Seed Federation	Michael Keller (Virtual)	Secretary General
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Kent Nnadozie	Secretary
International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture	Alvaro Toledo	Deputy Secretary
Netherlands	Charlotte Verburg	Knowledge and Innovation, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
New Zealand	Constance Kelly	Second Secretary, Embassy to Germany
Norway	Daniel van Gilst	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norad Department for Climate, Energy, and Environment, Senior Advisor
Spain	Hendrikje Stockebrand (Virtual)	Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food
Spain	Lucia Garcia Toledano	Counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food
Sweden, Sida	AnnaKarin Norling (Virtual)	Senior Research Advisor
Switzerland, SDC	Bruce Campbell (Virtual)	Senior Policy Advisor
Republic of Korea, RDA	HwangYong Kim (Virtual)	Director General, Technology Cooperation Bureau
Republic of Korea, RDA	EunJung Choi (Virtual)	Scientist



United Kingdom, FCDO	Alan Tollervey (Virtual)	Advisor
United Kingdom, FCDO	Rachel Lambert (Virtual)	Agriculture Research Team Leader
United States, USAID	Jerry Glover	Deputy Director, Center for Agriculture
United States, USAID	Tracy Powell	International Agricultural Research Advisor
United States, State Dept.	Simone Passarelli	Policy Advisor, Office of Global Food Security
Crop Trust	Stefan Schmitz	Executive Director
Crop Trust	Sarada Krishnan	Director of Programs
Crop Trust	Anne Clyne	Director of Business Operations in transition
Crop Trust	Dezreen Cameron-Stein	Head of Finance and Investment
Crop Trust	Hannes Dempewolf	Director of External Affairs
Crop Trust	Amrita Narayanan	Head of Partnerships
Crop Trust	Jaspreet Stamm	Head of Innovative Finance and Sustainability
Crop Trust	Isbandiyar Valiyev	Partnerships Officer
Crop Trust	Bailey Cate	Partnership Development Associate
Crop Trust	Walker Coleman	External Affairs Fellow, Minute taker

Annex 2: Meeting Agenda

28th Meeting of the Crop Trust Donors' Council Agenda

13 November 2023

Time (CET)	Topic
13:00	1. Welcome Dr. HwangYong Kim, Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
13:05	2. Introduction and Adoption of Agenda and Minutes Approval of the minutes from the 27th Donors' Council meeting held on 27 April 2023 Daniel van Gilst, Vice-Chair of the Crop Trust Donors' Council
13:10	3. Update from the Executive Director Dr. Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director <i>Discussion</i>
13:40	4. Fundraising for a Hungry World: Lead up to COP28 André Zandstra, Global Director of Innovative Finance and Resource Mobilization, CGIAR Dr. Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director <i>Discussion</i>
14:10	5. The Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS): Building Resilience through Diversity Dr. Simone Passarelli, Policy Advisor, Office of Global Food Security, US Dept. of State <i>Discussion</i>
14:30	Coffee Break
14:50	6. Finance and Investment Report Anne Clyne, Director of Business Operations in transition
15:05	7. Science and Project Update Dr. Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs
15:20	8. Donors' Council Business: Appointments of Executive Board Members and Re-Appointment of the Donors' Council Vice-Chair Dr. Stefan Schmitz, Executive Director
15:30	9. Conclusions and Next Steps
15:35	End