

Crop Trust Policy on Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence

Adopted	September 12, 2025
Adopting Body	Executive Secretary
Last Updated	September 12, 2025

1. Preamble

The Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust) is an autonomous international fund established under international law. It strives to ensure the long-term conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture with a view to achieving global food security and sustainable agriculture.

Acknowledging both the benefits and the negative impacts of the growing usage of artificial intelligence (AI), the purpose of this Policy is to establish the principles, guidelines and best practices for the responsible and ethical use of AI within the organization. This Policy aims to provide a basis for the Crop Trust to make decisions about how to develop, design, deploy and use AI systems, including multiple interacting AI systems, in a way that is trustworthy and puts human dignity and equality, human rights, preservation of the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, respect for cultural diversity, and data responsibility at the center.

The principles and rules governed under this Policy shall be complementary to the Crop Trust's other relevant governance documents, including but not limited to the Due Diligence Policy, Data Protection Policy, Enterprise Risk Management Policy, and Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

2. Scope of Application

This Policy applies to all staff members, service providers, project implementing partners, grantees and other contractors of the Crop Trust who use or interact with AI systems. In this context, the usage and interaction of AI systems includes usage and interaction in all organizational and operational activities of the Crop Trust.

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy;

“AI systems” means all systems which have the capacity to automatically process data and information in way that resembles intelligent human behavior, and typically include aspects of reasoning, learning, perception, prediction, planning and control;

“Ethical use” means the use of AI that is consistent with the Crop Trust’s rules and principles, respecting all applicable rules of international human rights law, including right to privacy, as the principles identified in this Policy;

4. Policy

- 4.1. Responsible use: AI systems should be used responsibly and ethically, avoiding any actions that could violate privacy, facilitate malicious activities or cause or exacerbate harm, whether individual or collective, and including harm to social cultural economical, natural and political environments.
- 4.2. Compliance: AI systems must be used in compliance with all the Crop Trust’s rules and policies and with all applicable national and internal laws, including data protection, privacy and intellectual property.
- 4.3. Justified and proportional usage: The use of AI systems should be justified, appropriate in the context and not exceed what is necessary and proportionate to achieve legitimate aims that are in accordance with the Crop Trust’s principles, rules, policies and procedures.
- 4.4. Transparency: Staff members must be transparent about the use of AI in their work, ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the technology’s involvement in decision-making processes. Transparency involves a clear statement indicating that AI was used and provision of information on the extent of its usage.
- 4.5. Accountability: Staff members who use AI in their work are responsible for the outcomes generated by AI systems. In case of any harm caused by such usage or if AI systems are used in violation of the Crop Trust’s policies, the relevant staff member will be subject to an investigation under the relevant disciplinary rules and procedures of the PPPM.
- 4.6. Data privacy and security: Privacy of individuals and their rights as data subjects must be respected, protected and promoted throughout the lifecycle of AI systems. Staff members must adhere to the Crop Trust Data Protection Policy when using AI systems. Without prejudice to Clauses 4.10 and 5.2 hereunder, they must ensure that any AI system to which personal or sensitive data are transferred should have sufficient measures in place that enable the processing of the data in accordance with the Crop Trust Data Protection Policy.

- 4.7. Bias and fairness: Staff members should acknowledge the biases in AI systems and actively work to identify and mitigate them. They should ensure that the data obtained through the usage of these systems are fair, inclusive and do not discriminate against any individual groups.
- 4.8. Judgment: Staff members should acknowledge and recognize the limitation of AI and always use their judgment when interpreting and acting on AI-generated recommendations. AI systems should be used as a tool to supplement human decision-making, not replace it.
- 4.9. Training and education: Staff members using AI systems must receive appropriate training on how to use them responsibly and effectively. They should also stay informed about advances in AI technology and potential ethical concerns.
- 4.10. Third-party services: When utilizing third-party AI services or platforms, staff members must ensure that the providers adhere to the same ethical standards and legal requirements as outlined in this Policy. Personal or sensitive data within the meaning of the Crop Trust Data Protection Policy, as well as confidential information should not be fed into the third-party AI services unless its framework is established through a contractual relationship.
- 4.11. Sustainability: The human, social, cultural, political, economic and environmental impacts of AI technologies should continuously be assessed as part of the annual review of this Policy, and appropriate mitigation and/or prevention measures should be taken to address adverse impacts.

5. Implementation and Monitoring

- 5.1 Under the overall supervision of the Executive Secretary, all teams of the Crop Trust are responsible for implementing this Policy and using AI systems in compliance with the rules and principles of the Crop Trust.
- 5.2 All AI tools must be cleared by the IT Manager prior to their usage. Feeding any sensitive or personal data or confidential information to tools not approved for use in the Crop Trust constitutes a violation of this policy.
- 5.3 When guidance is needed, staff members may consult the Contracts, Compliance and Risk Management Office (CCRM) on how to ensure compliance with this Policy.

- 5.4 Under no circumstance may AI be used to replace or bypass the Crop Trust's existing processes.
- 5.5 All staff members may report any suspected violations of this Policy or any potential ethical, legal, or regulatory concerns related to AI use to the CCRM Office or through the organization's established reporting channels.
- 5.6 Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the PPPM. The following acts constitute violations of this Policy. This list is exemplary, not exhaustive:
 - 5.6.1 Failing to declare the use of AI tools;
 - 5.6.2 Feeding personal data, information classified as "internal", including emails received and sent from the Crop Trust emails, or information classified as confidential, including contract clauses and outputs of project partners or suppliers, into an AI tool in the absence of a contractual relationship;
 - 5.6.3 Feeding any non-public information into an AI tool;
 - 5.6.4 Using AI tools in the review, scoring, assessment, or evaluation of tenders, bids, or proposals, whether in whole or in part.
 - 5.6.5 Using AI tools not cleared by the IT Manager;
 - 5.6.6 Having the AI tool generate outputs that are published with or under Crop Trust's name, including personal publications where the author publishes using their affiliation in the publication;
 - 5.6.7 Simply relying on the information provided by or delivering advice, reports, and other outputs, whether for internal usage or for sharing with external partners, based on the data provided by the AI tool without confirming with reliable resources.
- 5.7 The Crop Trust IT Management Team will conduct regular audits of AI Systems to ensure compliance with this policy and determine risks and mitigate them as necessary.
- 5.8 In the event of a breach or an issue related to utilization of AI systems, the Crop Trust will follow an incident response plan to mitigate the damages and prevent the occurrences in the future. The incident response plan will comprise of incident identification, an ad hoc response team established under the coordination of the IT Manager, an investigation and communication plan and a post-incident review.