Request for Proposal

Preferential provider for public relations partner for the Crop Trust’s BOLD Project

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROVIDER March 2024

1 BACKGROUND

About the Crop Trust

The Crop Trust, officially known as the Global Crop Diversity Trust, is the only international, non-profit organization whose sole mission is to support crop conservation in genebanks. This includes national, regional and international genebanks, and the world’s backup facility, the iconic Svalbard Global Seed Vault. In doing so, the Crop Trust has an important role in ensuring global food security.

The Crop Trust’s *raison d’être* is its endowment fund – paid into by public and private sector donors. This generates investment income which is used to finance crop conservation activities around the world. We estimate that an endowment fund worth approximately USD 850 million would generate enough income for us to support all of the world’s most important crop genebanks in perpetuity.

About BOLD

Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development (BOLD) is a 10-year project to strengthen food and nutrition security worldwide by supporting the conservation and use of crop diversity. Funded with USD 58 million from the Government of Norway and launched in 2021, it builds on the work and achievements of the decade-long Crop Wild Relatives Project (2011-2021). BOLD takes a six-pronged approach to address the key challenges facing the conservation and use of crop diversity around the world.

- **Capacity and Resource Development.** BOLD is working with 15 national genebanks in Africa, Asia and Latin America to strengthen their capacity to manage, document, conserve and back up the crop diversity that they hold.
- **Making New Diversity Available.** BOLD is continuing the Crop Trust’s efforts to broaden the genetic base of seven key food and forage crops: alfalfa, barley, durum wheat, finger millet, grasspea, potato and rice.
- **Genebanks and Seed Systems.** Led by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, BOLD will identify how best to strengthen the connection between genebanks...
and others involved in seed systems in developing countries to make sure that farmers and plant breeders, in particular, have access to the crop diversity they need.

- Safety Duplication at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. BOLD is providing technical and financial support to more than 30 partners around the world to help them regenerate seeds from their collections and to back them up both at another genebank and send them to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault for long-term safekeeping.

- Communications, Engagement and Outreach. BOLD is building a sustainable community of practice among partners to improve communication, outreach capacity and knowledge exchange.

- Building Opportunities for Lesser-known Diversity in Edible Resources. Working with multiple partners across four African countries, BOLD will enhance the conservation, production, and consumption of neglected and underutilized species (NUS), such crops include millets, grasspea, Bambara groundnut and an array of traditional African leafy vegetables.

**Purpose of public relations support**

The Crop Trust recognizes the vital importance of strong communications to help raise awareness of its work and build its reputation as a unique source of funding and expertise in the world of crop conservation. But with limited internal capacity to manage public relations activities, the Crop Trust is seeking a service provider.

We are looking for support to expand our reach, strengthen our media relations and improve our BOLD Project visibility amongst potential donors and the general public. Aside from having strong relationships with the leading international media, our service provider should have presence and knowledge of regional and local media in developing nations, with a particular focus in Africa, where many of partners are working.

In addition, the service provider will, when needed, help celebrate the overall work of the Crop Trust. Crop diversity, and crop conservation and use, are essential to helping solve some of the biggest challenges of our time: ensuring there is enough affordable, nutritious food for a world population expected to reach almost 10 billion people by 2050, in spite of significant challenges such as a rapidly changing climate and the exacerbated loss of biodiversity.

But the connection between these issues and crop conservation takes time to understand and unpack, for these and other reasons, in our search for a retained public relations partner, we would encourage proposals from those already familiar with our work, or with a proven track record of working with clients in the sustainable development or biodiversity conservation sectors.
That there is already more than USD 300 million in the Crop Trust endowment fund is evidence that many have already found the case compelling enough to make substantial contributions to our mission. With this call, we want to strengthen the role of communications in moving closer to achieving our target.

2 OBJECTIVES

The Crop Trust would like to request proposals for a service provider with proven expertise across the spectrum of PR activities, including the know-how and expertise in (a) organizing events that educate journalists in specialized areas of work, such as is the conservation and availability of crop diversity; and (b) pitching field visits for journalists to appreciate in-person the work Crop Trust partner carry out in around the world (particularly in the African continent).

3 GENERAL TERMS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIP

3.1 Working style

Meetings will need to be conducted during Crop Trust working hours [Central European Time and Central European Summer Time] unless prior arrangements are made.

3.2 Location

It is expected that the scope of work will be conducted remotely with contact taking place via electronic communication channels.

3.3 Contract duration

We are looking for a service beginning 15 April to 31 December 2024 with the option of extension for another year. Further extensions beyond these are not excluded.

3.4 Use of third-party providers

Work should not be outsourced to a third-party provider.

4 SCOPE OF WORK

4.1 Recommend outreach initiatives to deliver key messages

For 2024, the BOLD project will be announcing landmark achievements that will require PR media outreach efforts to deliver key messages to respective target audiences including donors, policymakers and the general public. We anticipate some key news opportunities over the contract period, relating to the Svalbard Global Seed...
Vault, new project activities, the results of project activities that are concluding, and others. Among them, new research being published in scientific publications. Other newsworthy announcements might focus on the BOLD Emergency Grant, or breakthroughs in pre-breeding or milestones in seed systems research.

4.2 Event organization and pitching field visits

The service provider will help organize a one- or two-day event in Africa wherein the Crop Trust and its partners will address the importance of crop diversity conservation, availability and use, and how genebanks and pre-breeders pay a role in addressing global issues such as climate change, food insecurity and sustainable agriculture. The service provider will help select and invite top-tier journalists from international and African (regional and local) media outlets, as well as scientific outlet representatives and investigative journalists specializing in related beats, such as conservation, agriculture, climate change, etc.

Additionally, to make the event more compelling, the service provider will pitch exclusive field visits to locations (post-event) in Africa where Crop Trust BOLD partners are working.

The purpose of these activities is two-fold: strengthen the Crop Trust’s relationship with journalists by raising awareness on the work the Crop Trust does; and increase media coverage around the issues related to crop diversity conservation and use.

4.3 Media outreach to secure coverage of news stories and targeted op-eds in high-level media

Regarding the BOLD Project, one of the Crop Trust’s top priorities – and therefore the top priority for our service provider – is positive coverage of BOLD, and its partners’ work in high-level media outlets, both international and local. This will ultimately be the measure of success of the service provider. For that reason, potential service providers responding to this tender should ensure they have close, effective contacts with journalists at high-level outlets.

The Crop Trust has much to offer in terms of unique expertise on a range of topics affecting our food systems. This provides many opportunities for proactive and reactive op-eds. With support from the Crop Trust, the service provider would develop compelling op-eds and pitch them to the media. Proactive op-eds could be in relation to key UN International Days or international events that can be connected to the Crop Trust mission; reactive ones could be in relation to news coverage of new scientific studies that would benefit from an additional angle or a credible, dissenting voice. Once again, the top priority for op-ed placement is high-level media outlets only.
4.4 Virtual planning workshop. One day maximum to determine some of the specific activities undertaken as part of this contract.

Planning the above work will require a virtual workshop at the outset of the contract. This would be to familiarize the service provider with the work of the Crop Trust, to meet the teams, discuss strategic priorities, assign focal points, and agree the PR timetable for the duration of the contract. We would expect the service provider to be represented by two of its staff.

4.5 Ad-hoc requests

Could relate to specific requests for advice on certain issues, or the provision of support in the event of a crisis situation.

In addition, the Crop Trust might need the Service provider to help disseminate non-BOLD related news. If a need does arise, the services required will be similar to those explicitly mentioned in points 4.1 and 4.3 and the Crop Trust will expect monitoring and measuring impact as stated in 4.6. Non-BOLD related services would be paid for with additional funds, beyond the maximum budget quoted in this document.

4.6 Measuring impact

The service provider should draw up and implement a plan to monitor and measure the impact of their work. The Crop Trust expects summary reports after each media outreach effort. And the service provider should produce a summary report showing for all activities undertaken as part of the contract, to coincide with the end date of the contract.

5 ACTIVITIES AND COSTS

We ask for an offer for a contract based on the following activities. Please also include the following costs in the proposal supplied as described (or provide and explain the standard rates if the below are not applicable).

For the duration of the contract each task will require a cost and time estimate for approval by the Crop Trust communications team prior to work commencing. Any travel, equipment or materials needed to fulfill this contract must be reviewed and approved by the Crop Trust team prior to implementation.

The Crop Trust has tax exempt status in Germany and is eligible to claim back VAT directly from the Government. Please indicate clearly in your proposal if you will be able to accept our tax-exempt status by not charging VAT, and please budget accordingly. If you are not able to accept our tax exemption, the assessment of your
offer will be based on gross amounts. Assessments of quotes from German companies are generally based on offers excluding VAT.

Contract Length: 9 months from start of contract (proposed start date is 15 April 2024).

**Maximum Budget:** US$60,000

*At the end of the contract period, there will be the option to extend the contract, subject to the availability of funds.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Daily rate</th>
<th>Hourly rate</th>
<th>Max. project spend/ hours</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual planning workshop</td>
<td>To be held prior to May 30, 2024</td>
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<td>One press release outreach campaign*</td>
<td>To be completed by Dec 2024</td>
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<td>Organize a Media Training Event in Africa (location TBC), including pitching visits to Crop Trust partners in the region.**</td>
<td>To be held during the fall 2024</td>
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<td>One Op-ed placement in a high-level media outlet (approx. 750 words) *</td>
<td>As required</td>
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<td>Crisis communications live support (upon request)**</td>
<td>As required</td>
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* Press releases and / or Op-eds will be developed based on needs and opportunities, which are tied to our partners’ achievements and / or world’s current affairs. For 2024, we foresee a minimum of three “media moments”. Please provide (a) rates for specific PR activities; (b) ‘estimated response and completion time’ for each task from the time of request, and (c) maximum availability in terms of hours/days they can guarantee under the contract.

** Travel of participants and coordination with relevant partners will be carried out by the Crop Trust.

*** Please provide the different rates that might arise, based on specialized qualifications or other considerations (e.g. overtime).

**6 PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals shall be evaluated by the Crop Trust using the following criteria:

6.1 Creativity and originality of proposal, in conjunction with its potential for target audience emotional engagement. (25%)

6.2 Expertise, experience, and qualifications of the Bidder to provide the services described in Section 4, Scope of Work, including physical presence and deep
knowledge of regional and local media in developing nations, with a particular focus in Africa. (25%)

6.3 Consistency of proposal to organization identity (10%)

6.4 The Bidder company’s financial health, plan to complete the work, and ability to complete the work in a timely manner. (15%)

6.5 Competitiveness of the Bidder’s proposed price. (15%)

6.6 Supplier self-assessment (10%)

For the above-mentioned items a series of quantifiers shall be tracked to better measure the progress and impact of the consultant’s work.

7 PROPOSAL APPLICATION & SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Proposals should demonstrate that the interested supplier satisfies the conditions stated above and is capable of meeting the specifications and timeframes listed in the Terms of Reference. By submitting a proposal, the Bidder certifies that all information provided in response to this RFP is true and accurate. The Crop Trust welcomes any additional data, findings, designs, or models a potential Bidder may offer.

B. Proposals should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Bidder’s capabilities for satisfying the requirements of the RFP. Examples of similar services (press releases, events, etc.) to similar clients are welcome. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content. Documentation must also include supporting examples to address the evaluation criteria.

C. The Crop Trust is not responsible for the vendor’s preparation costs, including travel and expenses.

D. Proposals need to include the signed Supplier Self-Assessment and DoU.

E. Proposal application forms must be completed in full – DO NOT refer us to your CV, Technical Proposal or website. Failure to complete the forms in full will mean your application will not be eligible.

Interested applicants are requested to submit their proposals based on the outlined above and the calendar of activities to the procurement office no later than 23:59 CET on 22 March 2024.

Proposals are to be delivered via email only and sent to procurement@croptrust.org.

The best 2-3 candidates will be invited to present their proposal the week of 1 April 2024.
Please note, any proposals sent (even in copy) to individual members of the Crop Trust, will be automatically excluded from the tender process.

8 PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

8.1 Proposal detailing the supplier’s intended approach. Please indicate which types of services can be provided in-house and which are typically contracted out and to whom.

8.2 Breakdown of costs of activities on hourly and daily basis.

8.3 Portfolio with examples of supplier’s work, pertinent to the requested services, preferably including examples of firm’s clients in the sustainable development and/or biodiversity conservation. Please include examples of news stories and op-eds that have been successfully placed in high-level media outlets in the past year.

8.4 History and mission of supplier and Curriculum Vitae of consultant(s) and for each member of the team (if a team approach is utilized, the names and biographies of those who would be responsible for working with the Crop Trust is sufficient). Please specify the lead contact person.

8.5 An explanation of normal procedure for clients - how requests for work are made, how much notice is required for new tasks, is there an additional charge for emergency/urgent work, etc.

8.6 References and testimonials, including any awards and achievements.

8.7 Your copyright policy.

8.8 Signed Supplier self-assessment (Annex 1).

8.9 Signed Declaration of undertaking (Annex 2).

8.10 Breakdown of costs of activities on the basis provided (see table above):
   a. Prices must be quoted in USD.
   b. Prices must be quoted free of all duties, taxes and other charges, including VAT. The amount of VAT may be shown separately.

9 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

See the following pages and resources for further information:

- Crop Trust press page
- Crop Trust homepage
10 General Bidder Information

Please note, for information or feedback on the procurement process, please address your email to procurement@croptrust.org.

Please submit your offer via email to procurement@croptrust.org no later than 23:59 CET on 22 March 2024.