



Food Forever



**CROP TRUST 2030
A STRATEGIC PLAN**



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The world is facing a multitude of serious, interconnected challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and inequality, food and nutritional insecurity, as well as increasing conflict and injustice.

Solving these problems is complicated, requires concerted action on multiple fronts, and is already generating disagreement about what specifically should be done, and by whom.

However, they must be solved—and urgently. Global temperatures are rising, biodiversity is disappearing forever, and people are going hungry.

We must act now, before it's too late.

Amid all the urgency, complexity and uncertainty, there is one thing we can do that stands out. Something that is not controversial, is relatively inexpensive, is technically feasible and effectively addresses lots of problems right away: We must conserve crop diversity.

Crop diversity is the foundation of sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems. The more crop diversity is safely

conserved and available to researchers and farmers, the more options we have at our disposal to respond to an uncertain future.

A diversity of crops—and diversity within crops—means more opportunities. It means more resilience and less risk. It enables more productive and environmentally sustainable farming in times of climate change. It is necessary to overcome hunger and rural poverty, and to provide a healthier, more balanced diet for all.

The Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust) has spent almost 20 years helping build a global system that ensures the long-term conservation of crop diversity. Working with national and international genebanks, the Crop Trust has stimulated collaboration and priority-setting, assisted in expanding and safety-duplicating collections of crop diversity, fostered improvements and efficiencies in their management, and supported the adoption of high standards and new technologies.

But the global system is not yet fully functional, nor sustainable. Many genebanks still face capacity challenges, placing important crop diversity at risk, and limiting its use. Much diversity is also missing from genebanks. The need for action is more urgent than ever. Climate change, natural disasters and geopolitical conflict threaten crop diversity, both in the field and in genebanks. We must act now, decisively, because we are losing crop diversity every day. And once it is lost, crop diversity is gone forever, unable to support future food needs.

This new strategic plan describes how the Crop Trust will rise to this challenge. By 2030, we want to permanently secure key collections of crop diversity in a viable global system of genebanks and help make this diversity more readily available for use in transforming agri-food systems. We want to use innovative approaches to increase the Crop Trust's financial ability to support the system, within an environmental, social and governance framework that is robust and transparent. And to help make all that happen, the Crop Trust wants to join with strategic partners in raising global awareness of the importance of crop diversity to unprecedented levels.

A wide-angle photograph of a snowy mountain range. The mountains are covered in a thick layer of snow, with some rocky outcrops visible. In the foreground, a body of water, likely a fjord, stretches across the middle ground. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. In the lower right foreground, a small, dark, rectangular building is partially visible on a snow-covered slope.

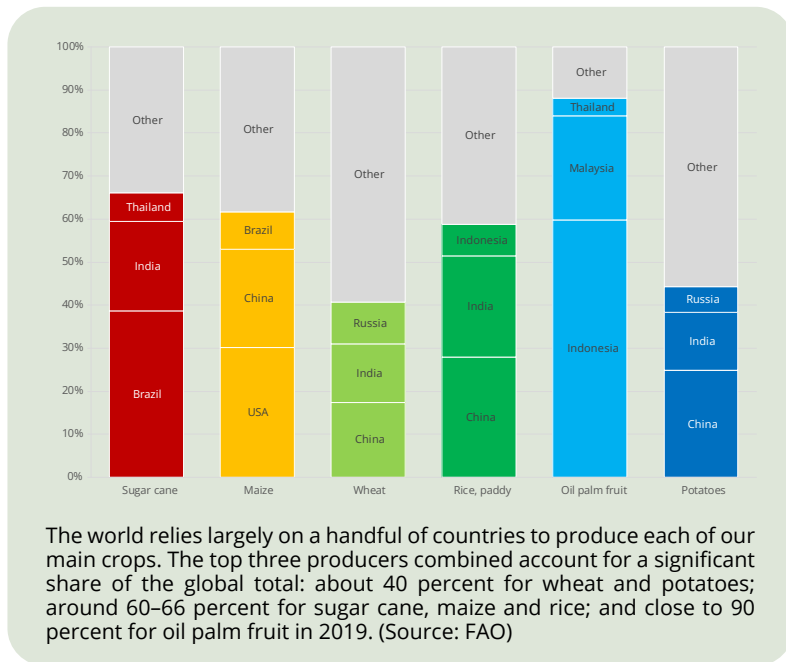
WHY THE CROP TRUST? OUR PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

Crop diversity is essential for future agri-food systems

Crop diversity is necessary to ensure the sustainable and resilient production of nutritious, widely available and affordable food in every region of the world under a rapidly changing climate. By understanding and drawing on genetic diversity, crop breeders and producers can increase yields, improve nutritional value and make crops more resistant to pests and extreme weather conditions. Crops that are adapted to local conditions, cultures and tastes can provide farmers with opportunities to develop a more self-reliant agriculture. This would not only make countries—particularly low-income ones—more resilient to food supply shocks. It would also lead to more secure livelihoods for smallholder farmers; to better opportunities for women and youth in the rural economy; to less food loss and waste; and to more diverse and healthy diets, including more fruits and vegetables, which are often unaffordable for many people.

But crop diversity is in danger

Since the first stirrings of agriculture some 11,000 years ago, farmers have domesticated and nurtured a tremendous variety of crops from their wild relatives, gradually improving yields, adapting to new environmental conditions, and satisfying diverse nutritional and taste requirements. Now, this unique world heritage is in great danger. Much genetic diversity has been lost as farmers worldwide have replaced their local varieties—also called landraces—with a much smaller number of more homogeneous, modern varieties of a narrow selection of crops. People in high-income countries have all but ceased cultivating traditional landraces as commercial agriculture favors products with specific characteristics and standards suited to market conditions. Of the estimated 20,000 edible plant species, only about 170 are widely grown for human consumption, and only three crops (rice, maize and wheat) contribute nearly 60 percent of the calories that humanity obtains from plants. This loss of diversity in farmers' fields is an expression of the globalization and industrialization of agriculture, which have paved the way out of poverty and into



prosperity for many parts of the world. However, the loss of crop diversity on farms also limits options for action in the future—if that diversity is not at least available for study and use from genebanks.

Complementarity of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation

Maintaining crop diversity in natural areas and on farms (*in situ*) is vital for the sustainability, resilience and health of our food supply. But conservation in genebanks (*ex situ*) is a necessary complement to it. It not only provides a “backup” for *in situ* conservation, but also allows researchers, plant breeders and farmers worldwide to access crop diversity more easily. *Ex situ* conservation of seeds in genebanks can be applied to common crops, such as wheat and rice, and to lesser-known crops, including from millets to buckwheat, amaranth, to bitter leaf and many others, as well as to their wild relatives. It is technically well understood and

cheap. Many crops that are difficult or impossible to store for the long term as seeds—such as many tropical fruit trees, bananas, roots and tubers—can nevertheless be conserved *ex situ* in an effective way, though at higher cost, using tissue culture and cryopreservation.

The world's genebanks

The idea of conserving crop diversity in genebanks is not new. The first modern genebanks were established in 1893 in Beltsville (USA) and in 1894 in Saint Petersburg (Russia). According to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, over 5.8 million accessions of crops are conserved in 827 national genebanks in 115 countries, 4 regional and 13 international genebanks. Crop diversity safeguarded in genebanks has grown by 17% since 2009. Generally, national genebanks hold a broad range of diversity of many local crops, chiefly for use by researchers, plant breeders and farmers within their countries. Regional and international genebanks manage more globally representative—and more widely used—collections of just one or a few crop species each.

Article 15 genebanks

The global agricultural research partnership CGIAR, and a number of other international institutions manage genebanks on behalf of the international community and make germplasm available to users worldwide under agreements with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Plant Treaty) within the framework of its Article 15. These genebanks are responsible for the long-term conservation and availability of nearly 1 million accessions of the most widely cultivated and globally important crops. Every year, they distribute tens of thousands of diverse, healthy samples of crop diversity and their associated information to thousands of researchers and plant breeders worldwide.



Michael Major/Crop Trust

Genebanks managed on behalf of the international community within the framework of Article 15 of the Plant Treaty

- Africa Rice Center, *Côte d'Ivoire*
- Bioversity International, *Italy*
- **CIAT** International Center for Tropical Agriculture, *Colombia*
- **CIMMYT** International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, *Mexico*
- **CIP** International Potato Center, *Peru*
- **ICARDA** International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, *Lebanon and Morocco*
- **ICRAF** World Agroforestry, *Kenya*
- **ICRISAT** International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, *India*
- **IITA** International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Nigeria*
- **ILRI** International Livestock Research Institute, *Kenya*
- **IRRI** International Rice Research Institute, *Philippines*
- **ICBA** International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, *Dubai*
- **CePaCT** Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees of the Pacific Community, *Fiji*
- International Cocoa Genebank, *Trinidad*
- International Coconut Genebank for the South Pacific, *Papua New Guinea*
- International Coconut Genebank for Africa and the Indian Ocean, *Côte d'Ivoire*
- **CATIE** Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, *Costa Rica*
- Joint Centre of the FAO and the International Atomic Energy Agency, *Austria*



The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is carved into a hillside in Norway, 130 meters above sea level. The seed storage area is located more than 100 meters inside the mountain, and under layers of rock that range between 40 meters and 60 meters thick.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault

Since it opened in 2008, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault has become the international face of crop diversity conservation, with its iconic doorway attracting global attention. Svalbard is located close to the Arctic Circle in Norway and offers a permafrost environment well suited to the task of keeping seeds cold and safe. With the capacity to hold 4.5 million seed samples, the Seed Vault is a ground-breaking international project initiated and operated by the Norwegian Government, the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) and the Crop Trust. While other genebanks actively use and share the crop diversity they conserve, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault simply stores duplicate samples of seeds deposited there by national, regional and international genebanks. Only the depositor can withdraw the material. This is the ultimate fail-safe backup for the world's genebanks. The concept has already proven its effectiveness. It was only thanks

to the Seed Vault that the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) was able to re-establish in new locations its collections of more than 100,000 seed samples after the civil war in Syria forced it to leave its headquarters in Aleppo.

Many genebanks are under threat

Despite the vital importance of genebanks for safeguarding crop diversity as well as underpinning research and plant breeding, funding for publicly held collections remains a problem. Many genebanks in low- and middle-income countries are in a precarious state, with significant portions of their collections unverified as healthy, infrequently tested for viability, as well as insufficiently regenerated and multiplied to ensure quality and availability for use. High energy costs mean that keeping collections cold in tropical conditions is a challenge for national and international genebanks. Staff skilled in the technologies needed to manage, characterize and document collections, and ensure plant health, must be trained and paid. Even the critical international genebanks managed by CGIAR centers have experienced funding shortfalls and accumulated processing backlogs in the past. Further, conflict has erupted in many countries, posing direct threats to genebank facilities and making the safety duplication in other sites an important priority. Thus, the crop diversity that genebanks protect is threatened by both internal and external factors, ranging from lack of funding to natural disasters.

International cooperation is indispensable

There are few activities in which international cooperation is as important for the survival of humanity as the conservation and availability of crop diversity. No country in the world is self-sufficient in crop diversity. In the majority of countries, most calories consumed are from crops that originated—and whose diversity is mostly located—elsewhere. And even the United States genebank system—one of the largest in the world—contains less than 10% of the crop samples found in genebanks worldwide.

The Plant Treaty declared that 64 of our most important crops—which together account for 80% of humanity's food supply—would be brought into one multilateral system, along with many of their wild relatives. All contracting parties would make their collections of this diversity available to everyone.

Importance of the Plant Treaty cannot be overstated

Recognition of the threats to crop diversity—and of the need for international cooperation to conserve it, as well as to facilitate its availability and use—was the driving force behind the Plant Treaty. Entering into force in 2004, it now has 150 Contracting Parties. The Plant Treaty's importance is immense. Contracting Parties commit to conserving, characterizing, evaluating, making available and ensuring the sustainable use of crop diversity in the field, in the wild and in genebanks, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

**THE CROP TRUST'S MISSION:
TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY AND USE
OF CROP DIVERSITY**



The Crop Trust is an independent organization under international law

Though the Plant Treaty ensures a global commitment to the conservation of crop diversity, it does not provide a permanent source of funding for genebanks. However, the Plant Treaty paved the way politically for the establishment of the Crop Trust as an independent organization under international law to take up the funding challenge. A total of 28 governments have now signed the Establishment Agreement of the Crop Trust. Initially based at FAO in Rome, the Crop Trust moved to Bonn in 2012, thanks to the generous support of the German Government. The Crop Trust operates within the policy framework of the Plant Treaty and in accordance with the overall policy guidance provided by the Plant Treaty's Governing Body.

We pursue specific objectives within the framework of the Plant Treaty

The Crop Trust's mission within the framework of the Plant Treaty is to ensure the long-term *ex situ* conservation and availability of crop diversity in a sustainable global system, including national and international genebanks. To align the long-term nature of the challenge with the generation of funding, the Crop Trust has an Endowment Fund with a target level adequate to provide long-term support for the essential operations of key genebanks. In addition to the activities backed by the Endowment Fund, the Crop Trust also commits short-term funding to projects that are consistent with its mission. This dual funding approach has proven very effective.

Remarkable success in conserving threatened crop diversity ...

The Crop Trust has already made a considerable contribution to the future of food. Working with the Government of Norway, it has facilitated the storage of more than 1.2 million seed samples in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, with more deposits made every year. From 2007 to 2012, national genebank partners saved more than 70,000 samples of landraces from the threat of permanent

Our Vision

We envisage a world in which crop diversity is permanently conserved and made available in support of sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems.

Our Mission

We support the conservation of crop diversity held in genebanks.

We promote collaboration among genebanks and their integration into an efficient global system.

We promote the availability of crop diversity to researchers, plant breeders and farmers.

We facilitate capacity building for genebank personnel.

Our Values

Integrity

Accountability

Professionalism and excellence

Environmental responsibility

Respect for human rights, social justice, equity and diversity

loss through the Crop Trust's support for regeneration and safety duplication. Partners also collected and conserved over 4,500 seed samples of crop wild relatives across four continents from 2011 to 2021—diversity that otherwise could have been lost forever.

... and using it for a more sustainable agriculture

New, climate-resilient crop varieties incorporating diversity from wild relatives are already making their way into farmers' fields thanks to breeders and farmers involved in pre-breeding initiatives supported by the Crop Trust. Under the CGIAR Genebank Platform and its precursor, both managed by the Crop Trust from 2012 to 2021, the 11 CGIAR genebanks distributed nearly 900,000 samples of crop, forage and tree diversity to more than 160 countries. Various studies that were conducted under the Genebank Platform clearly show that the use of these international collections is having a significant impact on crop improvement and sustainable agriculture around the world.



What makes the Crop Trust unique

The Crop Trust is the only international organization with the sole mission to help build a global system of genebanks in order to conserve and make available crop diversity. Importantly, it is also the only international organization that is equipped with an endowment fund to finance the preservation of this global public good forever. The decision of the international community to set up an endowment fund for this purpose was wise, innovative and farsighted: a long-term solution to a long-term challenge.

Financing long-term work through the Endowment Fund ...

Since its founding, the Crop Trust has been able to establish an impressive track record of providing funding for the long-term conservation of crop diversity in international genebanks. By the end of 2022, donors had contributed more than USD 253 million to the Endowment Fund, which has allowed a total withdrawal of USD 74.4 million for the period 2005–2022. Despite this considerable withdrawal, the equity tied up in the Endowment Fund is well above the total amount of capital contributions,

Did you know that if every single person in the world donated just 11 cents, the Crop Diversity Endowment Fund would be fully funded? Not everyone can afford to donate, but everyone must be afforded security of the human right to food for the future.



thanks to a sound, risk-conscious and highly diversified investment policy that also considers environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria.

... has proven to be successful

The Endowment Fund has generated a steady flow of funding to key international genebanks. This has been achieved despite multiple global crises, when donors tend to prioritize short-term impacts over long-term goals, and periods of considerable market volatility. Occasional declines in income are unavoidable, but they are much easier to endure than the uncertainty of funding streams that a genebank experiences when it depends solely on the outcome of replenishment conferences, or project funds.

Projects support time-bound tasks to complement work financed by the Endowment Fund

Its dual funding approach means that the Crop Trust not only supports the sustained maintenance of collections from the Endowment Fund's earnings, but also raises project money for time-bound tasks. The Crop Trust has received project funds totaling nearly USD 315 million, as of the end of 2022. These funds have supported the upgrading of national genebanks, the rescue and safety duplication of threatened crop diversity, the improvement of global information systems, and the systematic collection, conservation and use of crop wild relatives.

TOWARD A GLOBAL GENE BANK PARTNERSHIP



Much done, more to do, together

These successes are only a beginning. The Crop Trust is still some way from fulfilling its mission completely. All crop diversity that is unique and important for food and nutrition security globally is not yet safely conserved and available.

To make it happen, it will be necessary to continue supporting individual genebanks, but this will not be sufficient. Genebanks need to work together more—they must truly become a system. There must be more technical collaboration and knowledge sharing among them, more mutual learning and capacity development, better communications with all stakeholders, and stronger bridges to users. This will lead to higher overall efficiency and effectiveness, and more impact for the system as a whole. Over the coming years, the Crop Trust will focus more on how genebanks work together and with their users. They will be encouraged to look outwards—we call this moving toward a truly Global Genebank Partnership.

To do all this, the Crop Trust needs more financial resources. And raising such resources depends on greater public awareness of the importance of crop diversity. Our cause needs more political weight.

Three result areas of work, three institutional goals

Our work in support of genebanks and how they function together will continue to be financed by a combination of endowment and project funding, including a wide variety of interventions. However, their coordination under a single, comprehensive, cohesive framework will maximize synergies and opportunities. We will be active in three Key Result Areas, linked to the three overarching institutional goals of the Crop Trust 2030 strategic plan.



KEY RESULT AREA 1:

Long-term support for the maintenance of essential genebank operations

Goal 1: By 2030, the Crop Trust will provide long-term financial assistance for the essential operations of all genebanks that have signed agreements with the Plant Treaty under Article 15, and of additional genebanks that hold unique, globally significant crop diversity collections in the Multilateral System, meet agreed performance standards, and require external funding.

Essential operations of key genebanks will be financed from the income of the Endowment Fund

To maintain and make available the crop diversity in their care over the long term, genebanks must first and foremost be capable of sustaining a range of “essential operations” to a high standard. These key tasks include the acquisition, storage, monitoring, safety duplication, regeneration, multiplication, documentation and distribution of crop diversity. Supporting these essential operations—to sustain agreed performance targets—is the most important task of the Crop Trust and forms the basis of its mission. These are tasks that will never end, justifying their financing from the income of the Endowment Fund, whose income stream is designed to last forever. The Crop Trust’s Fund Disbursement Strategy will remain the principal guide to decisions about this in-perpetuity support.



The international genebanks and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault are the highest priority

International genebanks will continue to be the highest priority for such “forever” support. With specific regard to safety duplication, the Crop Trust has played a central role in the establishment, development and funding of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, the ultimate backup storage facility for crop diversity that can be conserved as seeds over the long term. Support for the Seed Vault, which operates through a close partnership with the Norwegian Government and the Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen), will continue to be among the most important activities of the Crop Trust.

System-wide support and partnerships underpin support for individual genebanks

Securing the essential operations of key genebanks and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault forever, while necessary, is not sufficient to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the global system. Strategic system-wide support is needed to complement the assistance provided to individual genebanks. This requires capacity building actions, such as strengthening information systems, harmonizing quality management standards and performance reporting, enhancing knowledge management, and facilitating better collaboration and division of responsibilities among genebanks.

KEY RESULT AREA 2:

Time-bound support for the upgrading, collecting and use of crop diversity

Goal 2: By 2030, the Crop Trust will have significantly increased time-bound support for: (1) upgrading facilities so that genebanks can meet agreed performance standards to become eligible for long-term grants; (2) monitoring threats to crop diversity and conserving threatened crop diversity in genebanks; and (3) enhancing the availability of crop diversity and bolstering linkages between genebanks and their most important users—researchers, plant breeders and farmers—in the global effort to transform agri-food systems.

Many genebanks require upgrading first

Essential operations are the heart of any genebank. Without them, the seeds will die, and the genebanks themselves. Many genebanks require substantial infrastructure upgrading and capacity building before they can function properly. Part of this process involves the improvement of conservation methods. For example, cryopreservation of those crops that either do not produce seed or whose seed cannot be preserved for the long term at minus 18 degrees Celsius offers an important step toward making the entire global system of crop conservation and use more comprehensive, effective and efficient.

Only when this upgrading process is complete, and an internationally agreed standard of operations has been reached, can further support be focused on the permanent funding of essential operations. Such upgrading is fundamental. But it is merely the first step.

Beyond essential operations

Having secured their essential operations—their first and foremost responsibility—genebanks will be able to fulfill their promise of facilitating the use of crop diversity to transform agri-



Michael Major/Crop Trust

Geopolitics can also threaten crop diversity. In 2023, unique plant genetic resources had to be transported over 1,000 kilometers from the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv to a safer location in the west of the country due to the ongoing war in the region.

food systems. To do that, they need to enhance the flow of crop diversity into, and out of, conservation facilities.

Rescue of threatened diversity

Crop diversity is threatened in nature and in farmers' fields. Its presence and distribution must be monitored, warning systems established, and alerts sounded whenever it is in danger. All crop diversity that is under immediate threat, and not already safely conserved *ex situ*, must be collected and added to genebank

collections. This includes crop wild relatives in natural ecosystems under pressure, and landraces that are in danger of being displaced from cultivation.

Genebanks for the benefit of people and planet

The Crop Trust will work with genebanks and other stakeholders to ensure that conserved crop diversity benefits current and future generations of farmers and consumers, while contributing to an agriculture that stays within planetary boundaries. Ultimately, the goal is to use crop diversity for inclusive, sustainable rural development that provides more opportunities, more fulfilling livelihoods, as well as better prospects for women, youth and marginalized groups. This will require investment in characterization (including at the molecular level), evaluation and pre-breeding, as well as the participation of all seed system actors (public and private), not just those directly involved in the long-term storage of crop diversity.

Making the most of the opportunities offered by the Digital Revolution

From more efficient inventory management via barcoding, to more comprehensive and accessible databases of genebank holdings, through to artificial intelligence to help select diversity for use – digital technologies provide an unparalleled opportunity to boost the use of crop diversity for sustainable rural development and agri-food system transformation. The Crop Trust will work with partners to ensure that genebanks are not left behind by the Digital Revolution.

Garnering support from the private sector

The Crop Trust will continue to seek project funding for all these time-bound activities aimed at enhancing the capacity of national and other genebanks. We will make a special effort to garner support from the private sector for these activities, in particular targeting companies that benefit directly from the conservation and use of crop diversity.

At a Glance: Global Genebank Partnership

Key Result Areas	Area 1: Essential operations	Area 2: Upgrading, collecting, use	Area 3: Global awareness
Supported activities	Maintenance of essential genebank operations, complemented by system-wide support and capacity development	Upgrading, collecting; empowering genebanks as development partners	
Time horizon	Long term (“in perpetuity”)	Time-bound	
Priority partners	International genebanks, Svalbard Global Seed Vault	National and other genebanks	Institutional partnerships, strategic communication, outreach
Funding source	Crop Trust Endowment Fund	Project funds	
Support mode	Financial assistance (grants to individual genebanks), complemented by technical system-wide support	Technical assistance, complemented by grants	
Legal arrangement	Long-term Partnership Agreement (LPA), Long-term Grant (LTG)	Project agreement, time-bound grant agreement	

KEY RESULT AREA 3:

Increasing global awareness of the importance of crop diversity

Goal 3: By 2030, the Crop Trust will have significantly increased global awareness of the importance of crop diversity, while broadening and deepening institutional partnerships. Through strategic communications and outreach, the Crop Trust will have moved crop diversity considerably higher on the global development agenda.

The Crop Trust will work with genebanks to deliver their message more effectively, both at the national level and internationally. This will help ensure the sustainability of our interventions,

by helping partners at all levels to secure political support and additional funding. Crucial to this enterprise will be the curation of a comprehensive and dynamic evidence base for the impact of the conservation and use of crop diversity on climate change adaptation and mitigation, on agricultural resilience and sustainability, on livelihoods, and on human health and nutrition.

Monitoring performance and documenting results

The Crop Trust will strengthen its ability to measure performance and document the impacts of its investments in these Key Result Areas, corresponding to the three institutional goals. In this way, we will be able to provide evidence of progress toward the fulfillment of our mission. The theory of change (Annex 1) and the results framework (Annex 2) set out the Crop Trust's approach to evaluating how its activities contribute to a world in which crop diversity is securely conserved and made available to achieve sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems for all. A set of key performance indicators has been identified. This framework will facilitate evidence-based resource allocation.



FINANCING STRATEGY

The Crop Trust's financial model is working

Since its founding in 2004, the Crop Trust has been able to establish an impressive track record of providing funding for the long-term conservation of crop diversity in international genebanks. A total of USD 74.4 million has been withdrawn from the income of the Endowment Fund for the period 2005–2022, thanks to donor contributions of over USD 253 million. Besides this, in the same period, the Crop Trust has successfully raised more than USD 315 million in project funding to address key priorities for the global ex situ conservation system, with a strong focus on national genebanks. Project funding has addressed—and must continue to address—specific aspects for building the global system, but it is complementary to, and cannot replace, the core funding stream represented by the Endowment Fund's investment income.

All core tasks must be funded by the Endowment Fund

However, the Crop Trust's Endowment Fund still lacks the financial capacity to fully address the organization's core mandate and mission. The ultimate financing target would ensure that the Crop Trust is able to fund all the long-term tasks encompassed by its mandate—as set out in its Constitution—from the annual income of the Endowment Fund. These include the following activities under Key Result Area 1: (1) the permanent tasks of financing essential operations in key genebanks and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, as well as (2) strategic system-wide support that aims to optimize processes in the global system.

The financial need

The Endowment Fund needs to be increased to yield USD 25 million annually as quickly as possible.¹ This annual amount will meet the core long-term funding needs of Key Results Area 1. After reaching this 2030 funding target, the Endowment Fund will need to grow further until it eventually yields USD 34 million annually.² This amount will be required to meet the funding needs for the essential operations of additional unique, valuable collections held by national and regional genebanks. In this way, the global genebank system will gradually be completed, and the Crop Trust's constitutional mandate will be fulfilled, with balance between support for international and national genebanks.

The urgency to accelerate growth

So far, contributions to the Endowment Fund have come almost exclusively from traditional government donors. It is important that the willingness of these donors to contribute to the Endowment Fund does not diminish. However, if the endowment continues to grow at the current pace, it would not reach

¹To generate this level of annual income, the Endowment Fund needs a market value of USD 625 million, in combination with an investment strategy yielding an average return target of 4% p.a. plus the rate of US dollar inflation.

²To generate this level of annual income, the Endowment Fund needs a market value of USD 850 million, with an average return target of 4% p.a. plus the rate of US dollar inflation.

maturity until 2050. This is far too slow to win the race against the irretrievable loss of crop diversity and the concomitant loss of the opportunity to use it to develop sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems. The Crop Trust must accelerate the growth of its endowment, balancing the long-term funding needs of the system with realistic annual funding targets.

A major fundraising initiative is required

To boost resource mobilization, a new financing strategy has been developed. To implement the strategy, the Crop Trust will engage in a major fundraising initiative to support the growth of the Endowment Fund. Success will require several major donations from large donors. Since crop diversity is a global public good, the Crop Trust will logically continue to approach public donors, but will also reach out to private foundations, and—to a lesser extent—high-net-worth individuals as well as the corporate world. In addition, innovative finance instruments will play an increasing, complementary role in raising funds. This overall strategy is only achievable with a significant strengthening of the Crop Trust's donor stewardship and engagement capacity, and with the development of compelling fundraising narratives and donor communications. These must highlight the key importance of the Crop Trust's mission and mandate at the nexus of the global dialogues on climate change, food and nutrition security, health and nutrition, and biodiversity conservation.



FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

Crisis-proof, profitable and responsible investment

The Endowment Fund is the heart of the Crop Trust. Its income makes the Crop Trust a donor in its own right, allowing the organization to reliably and predictably fund the core tasks of the global system of *ex situ* conservation. Equally important is that donors to the Endowment Fund know they are making a lasting contribution to the conservation and use of one of humanity's most essential global goods. Therefore, a financial strategy that aims at crisis-proof and profitable investment is vital. Furthermore, investing in accordance with strict environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria is fundamental to the Crop Trust's financing approach.

What exactly is ESG investing? It is a form of sustainable finance that has grown rapidly in recent years, as institutional investors and funds increasingly adapt to shifts in demand aligned with such values. The market for ESG assets is estimated to reach USD 53 trillion by 2025, a third of total assets under management globally. (Sources: OECD, Bloomberg)

A portfolio that is highly diversified and structured for the long term ...

The long-term objective of the Endowment Fund is to earn an average annual investment return of 4% plus the rate of US dollar inflation, in order to preserve the real financial value of the endowment over time. This objective requires taking on a commensurate amount of investment risk to be able to generate the average target return over the long term, with considerable short-term fluctuations in returns to be expected from year to year. The endowment portfolio is highly diversified and structured for the long term, so that short-term market setbacks should not trigger structural changes to the asset allocation of the portfolio.

... and in line with environmental, social and governance criteria

The Crop Trust is a signatory to the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)—an initiative that includes an international network of investors working together to put responsible investment into practice. The Crop Trust has established a Sustainable Investment Framework that sets out the beliefs and principles to be reflected in its investment policies. These beliefs guide decision-making across the investment strategy and determine how the Crop Trust uses its position as an asset owner to engage on key ESG themes. The framework is a living document that also sets out the targets and metrics we will use to measure and monitor performance against the agreed policies. It will be continuously reviewed and refined.

Net carbon neutrality of the endowment by 2040

The Crop Trust recognizes that climate change poses a great risk to global development. This means we need to limit the global average temperature increase this century to “well below 2°C” and to pursue efforts to restrict that warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as per the 2015 Paris Agreement. To manage this systemic risk and to support a “just transition,” the Crop Trust has set a target in its Sustainable Investment Framework for the Endowment Fund to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2040. Underpinning its climate ambitions, the Crop Trust recently became a supporter of the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures.

Robust governance and oversight of the Endowment Fund

The Crop Trust has appointed a single outsourced chief investment officer (OCIO), who has the discretion to manage the Endowment Fund within a defined risk-and-return framework. Governance and oversight of the Endowment Fund are exercised at four separate levels. First, the Crop Trust’s management oversees the activities of the OCIO on an ongoing basis, including regular discussions about portfolio performance and capital market developments. Second, every quarter, the Investment Committee of the Crop Trust Executive Board reviews the results of the Endowment Fund, interacting directly with the OCIO. Third, the Donors’ Council of the Crop Trust, which brings together all countries and private partners that provide a significant financial contribution to the Crop Trust, reviews the financial performance of the Endowment Fund at least annually and transmits the outcome of its deliberations to the Executive Board. Fourth, the Executive Board meets at least twice per year to review the overall financial and operational performance, as well as the strategic direction, of the organization.



**COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH
AND ADVOCACY**

Crop diversity is a solution to global challenges

Conserving and using crop diversity is of crucial importance for the future of humanity, and the work of the Crop Trust is key to ensuring the long-term availability of that diversity. It is essential to the Crop Trust's fundraising that these messages are communicated to the right people, in the right way, at the right time. To this end, the Crop Trust is implementing an ambitious program grounded in a digital-first communications strategy, with closely monitored key performance indicators.

Leveraging the Digital Era

The Crop Trust's communications strategy, launched in 2021, fully embraces the Digital Era. We will offer expert guidance to policymakers and the public by engaging strategic target audiences through varied digital communications. Having launched a brand refresh, a new institutional website, news hub, project subsites and social media strategy in 2022, the Crop Trust will closely track progress in digital dialogues and forums. Leveraging its new digital platforms, the Crop Trust will cement its place as the prime source of information on the best science and practice for the conservation and use of crop diversity.

Targeted events for targeted results

The Crop Trust will strategically engage in influential global forums, conferences and events, as well as online dialogues. A stronger focus on digital forums will enable the Crop Trust to reach larger and previously elusive audiences, to facilitate two-way dialogues on key issues and to maintain strong, results-driven partnerships with event partners. The shift to online and blended events will increase cost-effectiveness and greatly expand our impact, as more stakeholders have the chance to participate.

Social media and dynamic campaigning

Through the new digital-first strategy, the Crop Trust will reach a diverse and vastly expanded audience, to engage new strategic partners and to initiate productive conversations. Through social

media, as well as targeted political communication and campaigns, the Crop Trust will greatly improve the foundation for fundraising. Dynamic social-media campaigns will provide new pathways for engagement between target audiences and the Crop Trust. Social media will continue to increase in power as a central component of the current digital environment, and of the Crop Trust's communications strategy.

Key relationships and partnerships for global outreach

The Crop Trust's mission aligns with the goals of many other organizations that have large communications platforms. Through partnerships with these platforms, the Crop Trust will greatly amplify its reach. At the same time, the Crop Trust will launch new Communications Communities of Practice for genebanks around the world and will help them transform their own communications from one-way monologues into extended dialogues and engagement with partners, donors and diverse public audiences.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

Executive Board

The Executive Board is the highest decision-making body of the Crop Trust. The Board normally meets twice per year. It oversees the operations and activities of the Crop Trust in pursuance of its objective. The Executive Board also approves the budget. The Board comprises 13 members who are appointed by key Crop Trust stakeholders.

Donors' Council

The Donors' Council was established by the Executive Board to advise it on fundraising and other financial matters related to the activities of the Crop Trust; to provide a forum for the expression of donors' views on the operations of the Crop Trust; and to offer financial oversight and carry out other functions that are entrusted to it under the Constitution of the Crop Trust. The Donors' Council comprises public bodies representing both high- and low-income countries, as well as private donors.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible to the Executive Board for the operation and management of the Crop Trust and for ensuring that its objectives, programs and plans are properly developed and carried out. The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the Crop Trust and—subject to the supervision of the Executive Board—has full power and authority to direct the work of the organization.

Staff and organizational structure

The Crop Trust considers its staff its most important asset. The organization therefore devotes considerable resources toward ensuring their well-being and the maintenance of a productive environment. The Crop Trust strives to attract, retain and develop staff of the highest quality, and the organization's staff strategy will continue to focus on encouraging professional and personal growth; providing a safe and well-equipped work environment; and offering opportunities for staff to participate in matters that affect them and their work. The organization will further strengthen its policy on gender, diversity and inclusion (GDI). The Crop Trust is an equal opportunity employer committed to hiring staff regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion, political persuasion, marital status or sexual orientation. The Crop Trust strives to ensure fair and equitable treatment for its staff and discourages all forms of discrimination.

Policies and procedures

The Crop Trust is already governed by a robust set of policies and procedures, aligned with the standards of other international organizations. Therefore, a key goal through 2030 will be to conduct a comprehensive review of existing policies and procedures in order to identify areas for improvement. The Crop Trust will engage stakeholders across the organization to gather feedback and will ensure that policies and procedures are updated as necessary to adapt to changing needs. Furthermore, the Crop Trust will actively and continuously explore the inclusion of additional procedures and policies if they are required to meet donors' accreditation requirements for potentially accessing new funding streams.

Annex 1: Theory of Change

Underpinning this new strategic plan is the following Theory of Change, capturing the Crop Trust's vision of a world in which crop diversity is permanently, securely conserved and made available to achieve sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems. This objective is in line with international goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 17 (partnerships).

The Theory of Change focuses on three Key Result Areas, as articulated throughout this document: (1) long-term support for the maintenance of essential operations of key genebanks and strategic system-wide services; (2) time-bound support for upgrading, collecting and use; and (3) increasing global awareness of the importance of crop diversity.

The Crop Trust contributes to sustainable, resilient and healthy agri-food systems by strengthening the global system of *ex situ* conservation, enabling stakeholders to work and interact effectively and efficiently. This is central to providing farmers, researchers and plant breeders worldwide with the opportunity to use crop diversity.

The Theory of Change reflects the Crop Trust's mission of long-term support for the *ex situ* conservation of crop diversity. It maps the use of Crop Trust resources—financial and human resources, technical infrastructure and expertise, and strong partnerships with other organizations in the field—to support stakeholders at different levels. Ultimately, it guides the organization to better capture and communicate the impacts of its work and investment.

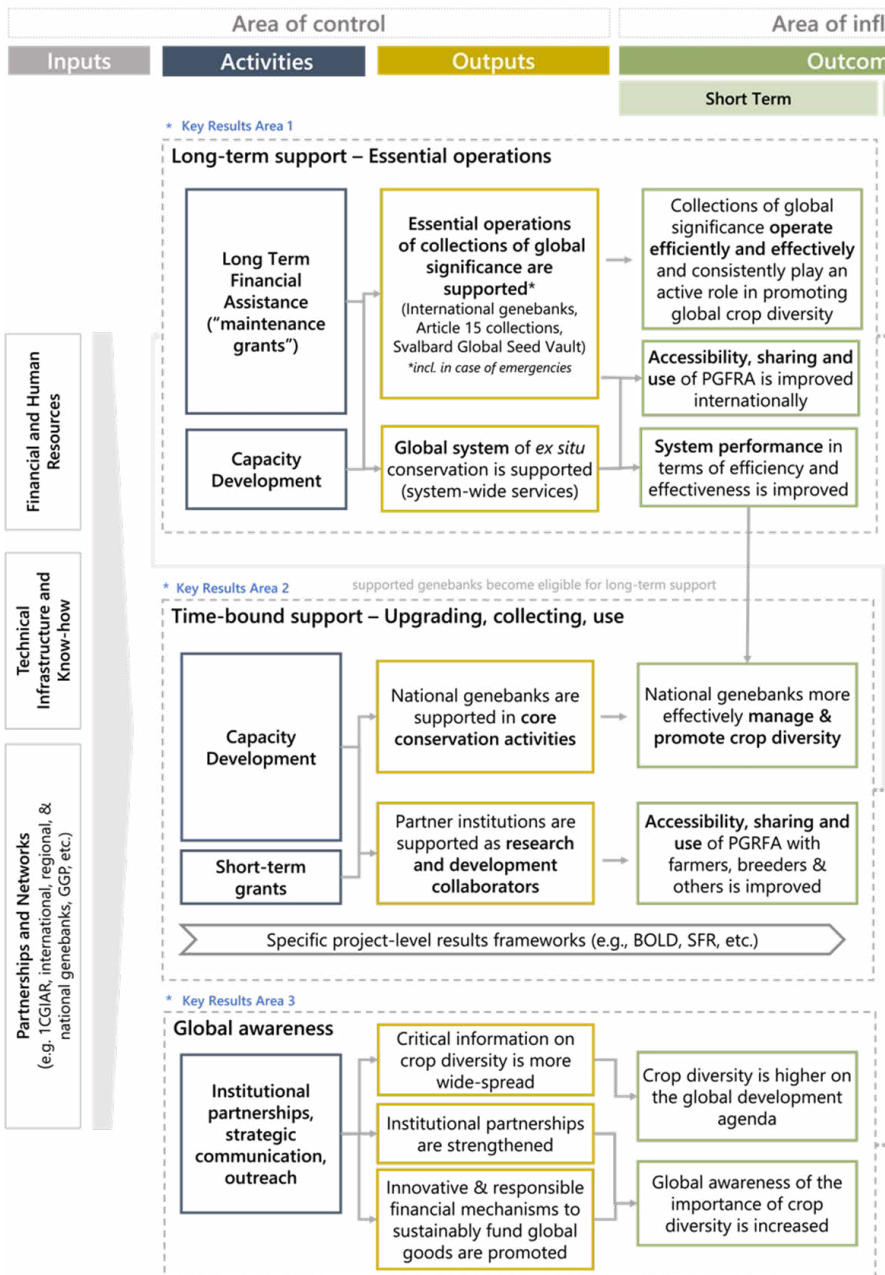
Annex 2: Results Framework

With this new Strategic Plan and Theory of Change (Annex 1), the Crop Trust commits to developing a robust results framework aligned with the three Key Result Areas, and to help achieve the three institutional goals. The results framework is an explicit articulation of the different levels of results (i.e., outputs, outcomes, impacts) expected from a specific intervention, activity, project or program. This contributes to enhanced transparency, accountability, learning and decision-making. The Theory of Change explains the process of change and illustrates how the activities and investments of the Crop Trust lead to the expected results. Being able to monitor results allows the organization to assess the effective contribution of inputs (i.e., financial and human resources, technical infrastructure and expertise, and strong partnerships with other organizations in the field) to the mission of the Crop Trust.

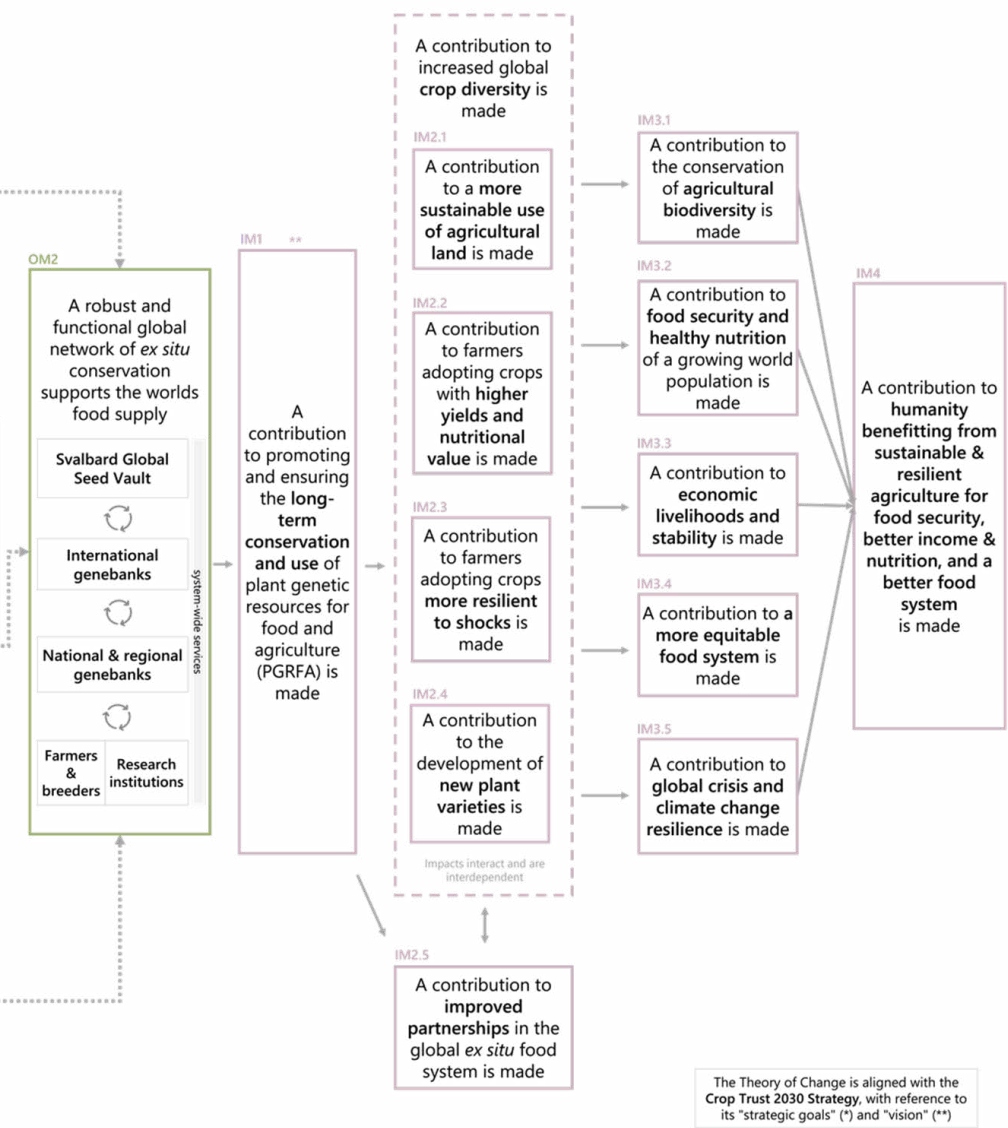
The current results framework builds on previous monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the Crop Trust. It has been developed in consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all were able to provide their input. The Crop Trust's sphere of influence has been mapped (i.e., areas of control, influence and interest) to establish the changes that can be reasonably linked to the activities of the organization and to identify key performance indicators for measurable results. The new set of indicators allows the Crop Trust to better communicate evidence on the organization's contribution to promoting and ensuring the long-term conservation and use of crop diversity.

To complement the results framework, the Crop Trust has a risk management plan to identify and manage high and significant risks to the activities of the organization. Managing such risks is crucial to achieving results and is thus a key component for effective organizational monitoring. The results framework will be regularly reviewed in response to emerging challenges encountered in the implementation of this strategic plan, and to evolving global scenarios.

Annex Figure 1: Theory of Change, Crop Trust 2030 Strategy



Source	Area of interest
Medium Term	Impact



The Theory of Change is aligned with the Crop Trust 2030 Strategy, with reference to its "strategic goals" (*) and "vision" (**)

Annex 3: Extract from the Constitution of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

Article 2: Objective of the Trust

(1) The objective of the Trust is 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.

(2) The Trust shall in particular, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing,

(a) endeavor to safeguard collections of unique and valuable plant genetic resources for food and agriculture held *ex situ*, with priority being given to those that are plant genetic resources included in Annex I to the International Treaty or referred to in Article 15.1(b) of the International Treaty;

(b) promote an efficient goal-oriented, economically efficient and sustainable global system of *ex situ* conservation in accordance with the International Treaty and the Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (hereinafter referred to as “the Global Plan of Action”);

(c) promote the regeneration, characterization, documentation and evaluation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture and the exchange of related information;

(d) promote the availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; and

(e) promote national and regional capacity building, including the training of key personnel, with respect to the above.

Article 3: Activities of the Trust

(1) The Trust will establish an endowment fund to provide grants to support the maintenance of eligible collections of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture that meet agreed standards of management and availability of the genetic resources, related information, knowledge and technologies; and to cover operating expenses and other expenses incidental thereto. For the purpose of this Article, the term “maintenance” shall include all activities related to Article 2.

(2) The Trust will also be entitled to receive funds other than funds intended for the endowment fund, and will provide grants to support the holders of potentially eligible collections in upgrading their collections so that they can meet agreed standards of management in order to become eligible for maintenance grants. Such funds may also be used to support all activities related to Article 2, and to cover operating expenses and other expenses incidental thereto.

(3) The Trust may also carry out such other activities as may be necessary for the fulfilment of the objectives of the Trust.



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