



## Request for Applications

### Consultants (consultancy firms), External Mid-Term Review of the BOLD Project

The Crop Trust seeks a team of two (2) to three (3) consultants to carry out the first mid-term review (MTR) of the Project 'Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihoods and Development' ([BOLD Project](#)) covering activities implemented in Phase 1 (2021-2024).

#### 1 BACKGROUND

Funded by the Norwegian Government, the BOLD Project was launched in 2021 and is managed by the Crop Trust and implemented in partnership with the Norwegian University of Life Science (NMBU), Nordic Genetic Resources Center (NordGen), the UN FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, national genebanks, and plant (pre-)breeding programs in around 50 countries.

Building on the work and achievements of the decade-long, Crop Trust-led [Crop Wild Relatives Project](#), also funded by Government of Norway, the BOLD Project Phase 1 has seven main activity areas, or work packages (WP):

WP1: Capacity and Resource Development

WP2: Making New Diversity Available

WP3: Genebanks and Seed Systems

WP4: Safety Duplication at Svalbard Global Seed Vault

WP5: Communications, Engagement and Outreach

WP6: Project management

WP7: Increase the production and consumption of neglected and underutilized species

The BOLD Project aims to sustain and complement the strengthened ability of 15 national genebank partners to sustainably conserve, manage, and safety duplicate the diversity they are holding with increased capacity to use that diversity (WP1). The BOLD Project also builds on the work done by pre-breeding and evaluation partnerships in the CWR Project, by facilitating the development and use of new diversity of seven key food and forage crops (alfalfa, barley, durum wheat, finger millet, grasspea, potato and rice) by breeders and farmers for climate change adaptation and food security in 20 partner countries (WP2). The project also supports four partner genebanks to proactively work with downstream seed system development initiatives (WP3), increasing farmers' access to crop diversity and thereby contributing to the resilience of seed and food systems. Through competitive grants, the BOLD Project is providing support to over 40 partners in 30 countries for the regeneration and safety duplication of seeds at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault (WP4).

The BOLD Project is managed and coordinated by the Crop Trust, with management decisions taken by a Project Management Team (PMT), which includes a representative of NMBU along with key Crop Trust staff. The activities in WP1, WP2, WP3, and WP7 are

implemented through sub-grant agreements with pre-selected partners, whereas WP4 included an open competitive grant scheme and subsequent grant agreements. WP5 is implemented by the Crop Trust's communications team. In December 2023, the Crop Trust launched BOLDER (Building Opportunities for Lesser-known Diversity in Edible Resources), which is also funded by the Government of Norway. This new work package (WP7) is an addition to BOLD to increase the production, and consumption of neglected and underutilized species (NUS) in Africa.

BOLD activities (and work packages) are designed to contribute to the following outcomes by 2030:

Outcome 1: Genebanks effectively manage crop diversity for long-term use by farmers, breeders and other users, including safety duplication (WP1, WP4).

Outcome 2: Genebanks facilitate the use of new crop diversity by breeders and farmers in the development of advanced lines with novel traits (WP1, WP2, WP3).

Outcome 3: Genebanks strengthen their linkages with seed system actors through technical and institutional innovations which enhance access to crop diversity (WP1, WP2, WP3).

Outcome 4: Genebanks proactively engage with stakeholders to advocate for financial, legal, technical and institutional support for crop diversity conservation (WP4, WP5).

Outcome 5: Increased use and value of NUS within agri-food systems in West and East Africa (WP7).

## **2 ACTIVITIES**

The external mid-term review (MTR) of the BOLD Project will include:

1. A desk study of relevant documents;
2. Interviews (telephone, online and/or via e-mail) with key partners and project staff, Crop Trust staff, and other stakeholders;
3. Travel and partner visits, if necessary;
4. Synthesis and analysis of data from interviews and desk study;
5. Preparation of the draft MTR report;
6. Addressing comments and edits from the BOLD Project Management Team on the draft MTR report;
7. Finalization of the MTR report; and
8. Presentation of key evaluation findings and recommendations to the BOLD Project Management Team.

### 3 GENERAL TERMS OF WORKING RELATIONSHIP

#### 1. Working style

The Crop Trust will commission work related to the activities described in section 2 and elaborated in section 4 below. The consultants will be required to meet and communicate regularly with the Crop Trust and key partners to collect information for the MTR.

#### 2. Location and travel requirements

It is expected that the scope of work will be conducted remotely with contact taking place via electronic communication channels. Travel, in-person meetings, and partner visits, if needed, will be planned together by the consultants and the Crop Trust. Travel costs (flights, accommodation, allowance) will be covered by the Crop Trust.

#### 3. Contract type and duration

The contract will be based on deliverables and cover the period from 15 May to 15 July 2024. Completion and approval of the MTR report is expected by 15 July 2024.

#### 4. Use of third-party providers

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

### 4 SCOPE OF WORK

The MTR will assess the technical and financial management of Phase 1 project implementation, with emphasis on improvement and organizational learning for enhanced project implementation in Phase 2. In addition, there will be a special focus on activities implemented under WP2 and WP4. The review questions used to guide the evaluation should reflect this purpose.

In particular, the consultants will examine the relevance and validity of the project design, the project's effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources, and the project sustainability for Phase 2 implementation, including lessons and best practices from Phase 1 activities. The following are potential evaluation questions:

**Table 1. Key evaluation questions**

Evaluation criteria	Technical questions	Financial questions
<b>A. Relevance</b> The extent to which the project design corresponds to the theory of change and overall outcomes of the BOLD Project.	How relevant are the outcomes of the BOLD Project Phase 1 and plans to achieve them?  How can the project design be improved to ensure that work packages are aligned with the theory of change and overall outcomes of the BOLD Project?	How adequate are organizational and financial management systems and processes in support of the project design and the management of the framework agreement with the donor?
<b>B. Effectiveness</b> The extent to which BOLD Project activities are expected to achieve, or likely to achieve, results.	To what extent did the BOLD Project Phase 1 is likely to achieve or progress towards intended outcomes?  How can the project design be improved to ensure that work	How adequate are organizational and financial management systems and processes to ensure cost-effectiveness in the achievement of outputs and outcomes?

Evaluation criteria	Technical questions	Financial questions
	packages are best integrated to achieve intended outcomes?	What are the critical areas to invest in to maximize overall project goals while efficiently utilizing BOLD Project funds?
<p><b>C. Efficiency</b></p> <p>The extent to which BOLD Project activities deliver, or are likely to deliver, results efficiently and timely, considering the overall use of resources.</p>	<p>How did allocation of resources (funds, people, time, expertise, etc.) support the achievement of the BOLD Project Phase 1 outputs and outcomes?</p> <p>How can the project design be improved to ensure the efficient allocation of project resources across work packages?</p>	<p>How adequate are organizational and financial management systems and processes to ensure cost-efficiency in the achievement of outputs and outcomes?</p>
<p><b>D. Sustainability and learning for impact</b></p> <p>The extent to which the net benefits of project activities continue or are likely to continue, in Phases 2 and 3 of the BOLD Project.</p>	<p>What learning mechanisms have been built into the BOLD Project design and implementation to facilitate the potential sustainability of results?</p> <p>How can the project design be improved to ensure the long-term availability of genetic resources from genebanks for use by farmers and other users?</p>	<p>How adequate are organizational and financial management systems and processes for financial monitoring and ability to feed information back through the organization, to the BOLD Project Management Team and donor?</p> <p>How can we accelerate the spending rate to ensure the effective utilization of BOLD Project funds?</p>

## 5 REPORT TEMPLATE

The consultants will communicate the main findings and recommendations through a written report. The report should not exceed 30 pages. The outline below presents a sample structure of the MTR report.

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Cover page

Table of Contents

A. Executive Summary

B. Purpose and scope of the MTR

C. Methodology

D. Findings for each review criterion

1. Lessons learned and good practices
2. Recommendations

E. Deep-dive analysis of BOLD WP2 and WP4

F. Conclusions

G. Annexes

1. Short bio of reviewers
2. List of people interviewed or consulted

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## **6 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND REQUIREMENTS**

The BOLD Project Coordinator, in consultation with the Crop Trust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager, approves these Terms of Reference, the selection of consultants, reviews the draft MTR report, and approves the final MTR report. The Crop Trust M&E Manager oversees the review process and follow-up activities. The BOLD Project Management Team reviews the draft report and provides input for the review process as needed. The BOLD Project team will provide relevant documents, facilitate interviews with partners, and arrange travel, if necessary.

The consultants will need to work as a team and be collectively responsible for gathering relevant documents for analysis and for developing the draft and final MTR reports, with support from the BOLD Project team. They should agree among themselves on the sharing of responsibilities in data collection, analysis, and report writing. The BOLD Project Coordinator will appoint a Chair from the consultants to coordinate with the MTR team, ensure that deliverables are delivered on time, and make decisions when a dispute arises. The Chair must also communicate regularly with the BOLD Project Coordinator and the M&E Manager.

The consultants should have established experience in conducting project or program evaluations, aligned with the [guidelines for the evaluation process and for preparing reports for the Department for Evaluation](#) of Norad. Further, the consultants must have technical knowledge in genetic resources conservation, crop adaptation to climate change through (pre-)breeding, and public seed systems, especially in developing countries and experience in managing multi-country projects.

The Crop Trust will schedule an introductory in-person meeting to bring together all consultants and key BOLD Project staff, discuss desired outcomes and expectations for the consultancy assignment, as well as address any questions to facilitate the successful conduct of the MTR. Another in-person meeting will be scheduled in the first week of July 2024 for the presentation of MTR findings and recommendations by the consultants and to gather feedback from the Crop Trust and BOLD Project Management team.

## **7 TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES**

1. Advance draft MTR report in MS Word, on or before 26 July 2024.
2. Presentation of key evaluation findings and recommendations in MS Powerpoint, on or before 2 August 2024.
3. Final MTR report in MS Word, on or before 16 August 2024.

## **8 PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Each consultant will be paid up to a maximum of USD 12,000 upon the timely and satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report, approval from the BOLD Project Coordinator,

and submission of an invoice. An additional USD 3,000 will be paid to the Chair of the MTR team for the additional responsibilities. For companies, the total payment should not exceed USD 39,000.

## **9 MEASURING SUCCESS**

The success of the consultancy will be considered mainly based on the following factors:

1. Quality of work
  - Quality and completion of outputs
  - Responsiveness to client input
  - Attentiveness, judgment, initiative
2. Timeliness of performance:
  - Work performed within established schedule/timelines
  - Timely and accurate progress updates
  - Milestones and activities completed within established timeframes
3. Interaction with Crop Trust/partners:
  - Ability to effectively manage interactions / communication with the Crop Trust and with partners

## **10 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. Minimum requirements
  - Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English required, demonstrated by peer-reviewed publications;
  - Work experience in developing countries;

The above-mentioned items are minimum requirements to be considered for evaluation.

2. Additional requirements on qualifications, skills, and experience will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
  - Knowledge in plant genetic resources conservation, crop adaptation to climate change through (pre-)breeding, and public seed systems (35%);
  - Experience in conducting program and/or project reviews (20%);
  - Experience in managing multi-country and/or international programs and projects (20%);
  - Cost-effectiveness (relationship between inputs/costs and the likely achievement of high-quality outputs) (20%);
  - Supplier Self Assessment (5%).



For the above-mentioned items, a series of quantifiers will be used to objectively evaluate and compare the applications.

## 11 APPLICATION COMPONENTS

1. *Curriculum vitae* in English (please include your current residence address, telephone, and email address) [if you are applying as a team (company, organization, etc.), please provide for each relevant team member].
2. A proposal describing your:
  - a. Qualifications, skills, and relevant experience (if you are applying as a team, please provide for each relevant team member);
  - b. Availability within the next three months;
  - c. Expected number of days, fees, and other costs for conducting the activities described in Sections 2 and 4. Please explicitly mention your daily fees in USD.
3. Completed Supplier Self Assessment (template to be provided by the Crop Trust)
4. Signed Declaration of Undertaking (template to be provided by the Crop Trust)

## 12 SUBMISSION OF REQUIREMENTS

Interested applicants are requested to submit their applications to the procurement office by emailing and attaching all requirements to: [procurement@croptrust.org](mailto:procurement@croptrust.org), no later than **23:59 CEST on Friday, 20 of May 2024**.

Only emails sent solely to: [procurement@croptrust.org](mailto:procurement@croptrust.org) will be considered.

**Please note, any documents sent (even in copy) to individual members of the Crop Trust, will be automatically excluded from the tender process.**

## 13 GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

For information or feedback on the procurement process, please address your email to [procurement@croptrust.org](mailto:procurement@croptrust.org).

Please be advised that the Crop Trust is not bound to accept any application, nor award a contract or purchase order, nor be responsible for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of an application, regardless of the outcome or the manner of conducting the selection process.