



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**



**International Treaty
on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture**

Item 16.2 of the Provisional Agenda

TENTH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Rome, Italy, 20–24 November 2023

Cooperation with the Global Crop Diversity Trust

Executive Summary

This document provides a summary of the activities undertaken and recent developments in the cooperation between the Secretariats of the International Plant Treaty and the Global Crop Diversity Trust (the Crop Trust) since the Ninth Session of the Governing Body (GB-9). It features, in particular, those initiatives undertaken in response to the policy guidance provided by the Governing Body to the Crop Trust through Resolution 12/2022. This document should be considered in conjunction with the document, IT/GB-10/23/16.2.2, *Report of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to the Governing Body*, which details the programmatic, resource mobilization and communications activities carried out by the Crop Trust since GB-9.

Guidance Sought

The Governing Body is invited to review this document, in conjunction with the following documents, and adopt a Resolution to provide policy and other guidance, taking into account the elements contained in the Annex to this document:

- a) *Report of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to the Governing Body* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2.2);
- b) *Report on the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk* (IT/GB-10/23/9.1.3);
- c) *White Paper: Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.1);
- d) *The plants that feed the world: Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.2).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its First Session, the Governing Body entered into a Relationship Agreement with the Global Crop Diversity Trust (the Crop Trust) and recognized it as an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty in relation to *ex situ* conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA).
2. The Constitution of the Crop Trust¹ and its Relationship Agreement with the Governing Body² provide that the Executive Board of the Crop Trust shall recognize the authority of the Governing Body to provide overall policy guidance to the Crop Trust on all matters within the purview of the International Treaty and submit regular reports on the activities of the Crop Trust to the Governing Body.
3. Possible elements of Policy guidance to be provided by the Governing Body to the Crop Trust through a Resolution are contained in the Annex to this document. The *Report of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to the Governing Body* is provided through document, IT/GB-10/23/16.2.2.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

4. The interactions between the Bureau of the Tenth Session of the Governing Body and the Executive Board of the Crop Trust have been very positive and productive, as has the cooperation between the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Crop Trust.
5. The Secretary participated in meetings of the Executive Board and the Donors' Council of the Crop Trust, and the Executive Director of the Crop Trust provided updated to the Bureau and attended other Treaty subsidiary bodies. Such participation and interactions enabled the regular communication and exchange of information.
6. Over the course of the biennium, a number of coordination meetings were held between the Secretariats of the International Treaty and the Crop Trust, both in-person and virtually, enabling numerous joint initiatives and activities to be organized and implemented, as further detailed in the following Sections.

Selection and Appointment of Members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust

7. According to the Constitution of the Crop Trust, four members of the Crop Trust Executive Board are appointed by the Governing Body of the International Treaty.³ *Procedures for the Selection and Appointment of Members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust*, adopted at the Fifth Session of the Governing Body by Resolution 3/2013, provides that “the Governing Body, unless it otherwise decides in future, authorizes its Bureau to carry out the selection of candidates for appointment as members to the Executive Board under Article 5 of the Constitution of the Global Crop Diversity Trust”.⁴
8. The Governing Body, through Resolution 12/2022, requested “the Bureau of the Tenth Session to carry out the selection and appointment of members to the Executive Board to fill any vacancy that may arise before the Tenth Session, in accordance with the *Procedures for the Selection and Appointment of Members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust*.”
9. While, as at the publication of this document, the Bureau has not made any renewal, selection and appointment of any members of the Executive Board since the last Session of the Governing Body, an update will be provided to the Tenth Session of the Governing Body, should any process be undertaken in this respect prior to the Session.

III. PROGRAMMATIC MATTERS

A. Resource Mobilization

10. At GB-9, the Governing Body recommended that the Crop Trust continue expanding cooperation with the International Treaty on mobilizing resources. It also recommended that the Crop Trust further engages with the Secretariat of the International Treaty to fulfil the important role of both institutions to

¹ Articles 6(3).q, 7(2)(b) and (c)

² Articles 2 and 3

³ Article 5(1)(a)

⁴ B. 3.

mobilize support for the maintenance of collections held pursuant to Article 15 of the International Treaty (Article 15 collections). In doing so, it encouraged both institutions to engage the wide range of donors and partners that host or support these international collections.

11. Cooperation between the Crop Trust and the Secretary on resource mobilization has continued to significantly expand since the last session of the Governing Body. As a result, a number of new resource mobilization initiatives have been co-developed and implemented by the two institutions, as summarised below.

Funding Facility for short-term support of International Collections

12. The Secretariat and the Crop Trust collaborated to establish and mobilize resources for a Funding Facility to provide short-term support to certain International Collections (Funding Facility). The Funding Facility will provide, on a short-term basis, the resources needed to fund essential operations of international collections until the Crop Trust's endowment fund reaches adequate levels to fund the collections in perpetuity. The Funding Facility focuses on collections not under the One CGIAR governance structure. The Crop Trust Executive Board has approved its establishment and Operational Framework in collaboration with the International Treaty.

13. Under the Funding Facility initiative, the Secretary has collaborated with the Crop Trust on resource mobilization efforts, including on the co-development of a US\$3 million funding submission for the short-term support of priority Article 15 Collections.

Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihood and Development (BOLD) initiative

14. At GB-9, the Governing body encouraged further collaboration between the Secretary and the Crop Trust to undertake joint capacity building of national partners on Treaty implementation. The Secretary has been collaborating with the Crop Trust on the project, Biodiversity for Opportunities, Livelihood and Development (BOLD), since the beginning of 2023. Under one of the BOLD work packages, training on PGRFA policy and law was delivered to staff of national genebanks participating in the project. One group training took place in May 2023 as part of a project meeting, and other training activities at the international and national levels, including related to the implementation of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty, will be implemented in the next biennium.

15. The BOLD project also provides funding to the Trust and Treaty's jointly established Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk, as further detailed further in the document, GB-10/23/9.1.3, *Report on the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk*.

Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk

16. GB-9 welcomed the joint establishment of the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk (the Reserve). The Reserve is designed to provide rapid, short-term and urgent support to ex situ collections in the Multilateral System, where there is an imminent threat to the collection and no alternative financial support is available.

17. At the time of publication of this document, three new requests for support by the Reserve were received from Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Sudan. At its seventh meeting, the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization had requested the Secretariat and the Crop Trust to look into possible support through the Emergency Reserve for Sudan, should it be needed.⁵ The Treaty Secretary and the Crop Trust have undertaken a joint assessment of the proposals received based upon the eligibility criteria agreed by the two institutions through the Reserve's Operational Framework.⁶ The Secretary will provide an update on the consideration of these requests either through a revised version of this document or during the Tenth Session of the Governing Body.

18. Document GB-10/23/9.1.3, *Report on the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk* provides a comprehensive financial and technical report on the joint operation of the Emergency Reserve.

⁵ IT/GB-10/SFC-7/23/Report, para. 30

⁶ [An Emergency Reserve for Genebanks - Operational Framework \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/emergency-reserve-for-genebanks-operational-framework)

Support for the relocation of Ukraine's national seed collection

19. The Secretary collaborated with the Crop Trust and relevant FAO units to relocate a major collection of unique plant genetic material from Kharkiv, an active conflict zone in the east of Ukraine, to a safer location in the west of the country, under an FAO project funded by the European Union (EU). The initiative is part of an international effort to ensure coordinated action to safeguard Ukraine's agricultural heritage. The Nordic Genetic Resource Center (NordGen) and the Novo Nordisk Foundation also provided early emergency support to Ukraine's national genebank.

20. The Crop Trust and the Treaty Secretariat are the project's technical partners of the project lead by FAO Ukraine and have worked together to coordinate the provision of relevant expertise in planning and delivering activities, including the relocation of the collection, the construction of an additional depository in the west of Ukraine, and the development of a long-term plan for the rehabilitation of Ukraine's PGRFA system.

21. The long-term plan was developed through a workshop held in Bonn, Germany, in May 2023 under the EU project organised by the Crop Trust. It was attended by representatives of Ukraine's PGRFA system, the Treaty Secretariat, FAO Ukraine, as well as international experts from NordGen, Germany, Canada and the ECPGR. The Plan has since been approved by the Ukraine National Academy of Agrarian Sciences.

Participation in the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (Funding Committee)

22. The Executive Director of the Global Crop Diversity Trust (Crop Trust), Mr Stefan Schmitz, and the Director of the External Affairs, Mr. Hannes Dempewolf, provided updates to the Funding Committee on the work of the Crop Trust as well as on progress in its resource mobilizations efforts, including joint Treaty-Trust initiatives.

23. The Committee thanked the Crop Trust for the comprehensive update it provided and welcomed the update on the joint Treaty and Crop Trust funding facilities of the Emergency Reserve and the short-term support for international collections.

24. The Committee took note of the proposed Global Genebank Summit, being organised in collaboration with the Treaty Secretariat. It noted that while the focus of the Summit is on ex situ conservation, the Secretariat should explore the possibility of using the opportunity to share information on the BSF and related projects, and to show how it complements other funding mechanisms.

B. Scientific and Technical Matters

Support to Article 15 collection of Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE)

25. At GB-9, the Governing Body invited the Crop Trust to continue and expand cooperation with the Secretary, in accordance with Article 15.1(g) of the International Treaty, on mobilizing technical support for the orderly maintenance of such collections.

26. During the biennium, the Treaty Secretariat and the Crop Trust collaborated to provide support for the rejuvenation of the Article 15 coffee collection maintained by CATIE in Costa Rica. Based on the recommendations of the global coffee conservation strategy, and a follow-up study funded by Felco SA, the collection is being moved to a new, better field site at CATIE, while making sure that all accessions are represented by adequate numbers of trees and are fully documented.

27. Both institutions regularly exchange information about technical, policy and funding developments related to Article 15 collections.

Global webinar on the Role of Sorghum and Millets Genetic Resources in Sustainable Agriculture

28. The Ninth Session of the Governing Body welcomed the organization of a series of international panels of experts by the Crop Trust and the Secretariat of the International Treaty to bring together key actors in the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), and encouraged the two institutions to build upon the experience gained to continue jointly delivering scientific and technical training and expertise, including by taking advantage of on-line mechanisms.

29. In support of the International Year of Millets, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Crop Trust and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), jointly organized an international panel of high-level experts to highlight the importance of the genetic diversity of sorghum and millets for food security and sustainable agriculture. The online forum, which was open to the public, was attended by about 200 participants. It featured a panel of 12 speakers comprising high-level experts from FAO, the Crop Trust, ICRISAT and other government, private sector, and civil society organizations, with an interest in sorghum and millets. The experts provided a global overview of the status of production of sorghum and millets, and how they are currently conserved, shared and used by international genebanks, national programs, researchers and breeders, the seed sector and non-governmental organizations. Barriers to the effective and efficient use of the diversity of these small grains were identified, as well as opportunities to overcome them. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of PGRFA

30. At GB-9, the Governing Body recommended that the Crop Trust further enhance its collaboration and complementarity with the International Treaty on scientific and technical matters, in particular in the area of Crop Conservation Strategies. In this context, it invited the Crop Trust to make available the White Paper the Crop Trust is developing, when finalized, to enable the Governing Body to provide policy guidance at its Tenth Session. The Governing Body also included the following milestone for the Tenth Session in its MYPOW: strengthening information-based decision-making in PGRFA management: results of two new global analyses. The two analyses referred to in the MYPOW are described in this section.

31. The Secretariat contributed to the initial implementation phase of the new three-year project, *Mainstreaming the Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes*. The project was presented in a joint side event on the margins of the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, titled “Global Crop Conservation Strategies: evidence-based priority-setting for the global system for the conservation of PGRFA”. The Crop Trust has made the *White Paper: Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes* available to the Governing Body through the document, IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.1.

32. The Secretariat collaborated with the Crop Trust to finalize the study, “*The plants that feed the world: Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture*”, a pre-publication of which had been presented to GB-9. A variety of background material and visibility products related to this study, including a podcast featuring staff of the Secretariat and of the Crop Trust, will be available before the Tenth Session of the Governing Body, through the website of the International Treaty. The study is presented in the document, IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.2.

C. Global Information System

33. At GB-9, the Governing Body invited the Crop Trust to continue participating in the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System and provide regular updates on the implementation of its activities relevant to the Global Information System.

34. The Crop Trust participated actively in the Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System held in May 2023. During the meeting, the Committee noted the update provided on Genesys and other relevant information initiatives and projects. The Committee further advised the Secretary to continue fostering collaboration to strengthen synergies among these initiatives.

35. The Secretariat engaged actively in the Genesys Advisory Committee in October 2022, contributing to the review of the draft programme of work for Genesys. Additionally, the Secretariat shared valuable information on the status of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) documentation in selected genebanks of developing countries. Furthermore, the Secretariat and the Crop Trust identified opportunities for collaboration to foster the use and sharing of PGRFA information.

D. Outreach and Communication

36. At GB-9, the Governing Body recommended that the Crop Trust continues and strengthen cooperation with the International Treaty to jointly develop outreach and communication products and to further systematize and strengthen such cooperation in the next biennium.

37. The Treaty and Crop Trust have collaborated on a number of outreach and communication initiatives, including the *Global webinar on the Role of Sorghum and Millets Genetic Resources in Sustainable Agriculture* reported in Section B, as well as the initiatives detailed below.

Global Crop Diversity Summit

38. The Treaty Secretariat and the Crop Trust are collaborating in the organisation of a first-ever Global Crop Diversity Summit. The Summit will take place in November 2023 in Berlin, Germany, and brings together key stakeholders from around the world. It aims to raise political awareness of the importance of crop diversity for opportunities, livelihoods and development, to strengthen cooperation among seed banks around the world, and increase their impact.

39. The Summit will also focus on the reliance of agrifood systems on crop diversity and outline recommendations to policymakers on how to strengthen genebanks as sources of crop diversity for researchers, plant breeders and farmers. The Secretary will provide an update on the outcome of the Summit to the Governing Body at the Tenth Session.

Joint submission – feedback on the draft reporting framework of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures

40. The Crop Trust and the Treaty Secretariat collaborated on a joint submission of feedback on the draft reporting framework of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TFND).⁷

41. The TFND draft framework is a global risk management and disclosure initiative designed for companies and financial institutions across all sectors and along value chains to identify, report and act on evolving nature-related risks and opportunities. It contains metrics for the agriculture and food sector, including related to crop biodiversity, and encourages alignment with international policy goals such as the Global Biodiversity Framework.

42. The Treaty Secretariat and Trust's joint submission was part of a public consultation undertaken by TFND to gather feedback from a range of stakeholders. It provided feedback related to developing guidance for the food and agriculture sector, on agrobiodiversity and PGRFA in particular, and is published on the TFND website.

43. The TFND final recommendations and first version of the TNFD framework is expected to be published in September 2023 for market adoption.

IV. GUIDANCE SOUGHT

44. The Governing Body is invited to take note of the activities and cooperation reported in this document, in conjunction with the following relevant documents, and adopt a Resolution to provide policy and other guidance, taking into account the elements contained in the Annex to this document:

- a) *Report of the Global Crop Diversity Trust to the Governing Body* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2.2);
- b) *Report on the Emergency Reserve for Germplasm Collections at Risk* (IT/GB-10/23/9.1.3);
- c) *White Paper: Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.1); and,
- d) *The plants that feed the world: Baseline data and metrics to inform strategies for the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture* (IT/GB-10/23/16.2/Inf.2).

⁷ [Welcome to the TNFD Nature-Related Risk & Opportunity Management and Disclosure Framework » TNFD](#)

DRAFT RESOLUTION **/2023**POLICY GUIDANCE TO THE GLOBAL CROP DIVERSITY TRUST**

THE GOVERNING BODY,

Recalling that the Global Crop Diversity Trust (the Crop Trust) is an essential element of the Funding Strategy of the International Treaty, in relation to the ex situ conservation and availability of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture;

Recalling that pursuant to Article 1(5) of its Constitution the Crop Trust shall operate in accordance with the overall policy guidance to be provided by the Governing Body of the International Treaty;

Taking note of the Report from the Crop Trust, which addresses matters requested by Resolution 10/2019;

Recalling the importance of cooperation with the Crop Trust on resource mobilization, including for national genebanks in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

PART I: POLICY GUIDANCE

1. **Thanks** the Executive Board of the Crop Trust for having regularly submitted its annual report on the activities of the Crop Trust to the Governing Body and its Bureau;
2. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Secretary to inform the Executive Board of the Crop Trust on the decisions made by the Governing Body and provides policy guidance on the following key areas;

A. Resource Mobilization

3. **Thanks** governments and other donors that have provided funds for the Crop Trust Endowment Fund, in particular towards enabling it to secure long-term funding for collections held pursuant to Article 15 of the International Treaty, with contributions paid into the endowment, as reported by the Crop Trust, currently at USD two hundred and fifty three million;
4. **Invites** the Crop Trust to provide information, at the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body, on progress made with resource mobilization during the next biennium for the Crop Trust Endowment Fund, as well as in relation to mobilization of project-based funds, including to support selected national genebanks in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
5. **Welcomes** and commends the substantial increase in cooperation on resource mobilization by the Executive Director of the Crop Trust and the Secretary of the International Treaty, and thanks donors that have given priority to support implementation of joint initiatives;
6. **Recommends** that the Crop Trust continue expanding cooperation with the International Treaty on mobilizing resources, and further encourages donors to give priority to initiatives, projects and programmes that are jointly designed and implemented by the Crop Trust and the Secretariat;
7. **Recalling** that at its Ninth Session it had recommended the Crop Trust continue engaging with the Secretariat of the International Treaty to fulfil the important role of both institutions to mobilize support for the maintenance of collections held pursuant to Article 15 of the International Treaty (Article 15 collections), **welcomes** the establishment of the Funding Facility for short-term support of International Collections and **recommends** that both institutions further collaborate in this area and in doing so, engage the wide range of donors and partners that host or support these international collections.
8. **Thanks** the Crop Trust for its active support to the work of the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization (Funding Committee) and **invites** the Crop Trust to continue strengthening its support to the Funding Committee;

9. **Commends** the Crop Trust and Treaty Secretariat, as well as other partners, on their efforts to coordinate and provide support for the rescue and relocation of the national seed collection of Ukraine, including the development of a long-term plan for Ukraine's PGRFA system and **encourages** them to continue to collaborate with relevant FAO units and the PGRFA community to leverage further support for the initiative, and **calls on** donors to provide financial support to facilitate this initiative;

B. Scientific and Technical Matters

10. **Welcomes** the support provided by the Crop Trust during the current biennium to enable the long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity within Article 15 collections, and **invites** the Crop Trust to continue and expand cooperation with the Secretary, in accordance with Article 15.1(g) of the International Treaty, on mobilizing technical support for the orderly maintenance of such collections;

11. **Welcomes** the range of initiatives promoted by the Crop Trust to support national genebanks including training in genebank management and the development of standard operating protocols; **encourages** further collaboration with the Secretariat to undertake joint capacity building of national partners on Treaty implementation; and **reaffirms** that capacity building for ex-situ conservation at the national level is a crucial element for the success of the International Treaty;

12. **Welcomes** the organization of a high-level panel of experts on genetic diversity of sorghum and millets for food security and sustainable agriculture during the International Year of Millets and **encourages** the two institutions to continue jointly delivering scientific and technical training and expertise through all available means, including on-line tools;

C. Global Information System

13. **Welcomes** the close collaboration of the Crop Trust with the International Treaty and FAO in the area of PGRFA information, and **invites** them to continue collaborating on training and capacity development activities in the area of information systems and documentation of PGRFA;

14. Further **invites** the Crop Trust to continue participating in the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System and provide regular updates on the implementation of its activities relevant to the Global Information System;

D. Communication and Outreach

15. **Recommends** the Crop Trust to continue and strengthen cooperation with the International Treaty to jointly develop outreach and communication products and to further systematize and strengthen such cooperation in the next biennium;

E. Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies

16. **Thanks** the Crop Trust for making the *White Paper: Mainstreaming Global Crop Conservation Strategies in Plant Treaty Processes* available and **takes note** of the recommendations it contains on governance, development and implementation of the Global Crop Conservation Strategies (GCCS).

17. **Encourages** Contracting Parties to raise awareness of existing GCCS and to make use of the GCCS, as appropriate, in implementing their national plans and strategies and **invites** Contracting Parties and donors to make funding available for the implementation of existing GCCS, and development, publication, promotion and implementation of future GCCS;

18. **Encourages** the Crop Trust and other stakeholders involved in developing GCCS, including national experts, to further elaborate areas of relevance to the implementation of the Plant Treaty;

19. **Welcomes** the recommendation that an international advisory committee is established to provide guidance on the scope, format, timing and priority crops for the GCCS;

20. **Emphasizes** the importance of contributions that national experts can make to the development and implementation of GCCS;

21. **Requests** the Crop Trust and the Treaty Secretary to develop a concept note on the establishment of an international advisory committee, including its mandate to provide guidance on the scope, format, timing

and priority crops for the GCCS as well as its proposed composition, and on funding and implementation modalities for future GCCS, including through contributions by national experts, for consideration of the Governing Body at its Eleventh Session.

22. **Emphasizes** the importance of crop networks for the implementation of GCCS and **encourages** Contracting Parties and other stakeholders to establish new crop networks, and revive historical ones;

23. **Requests** the Scientific Advisory Committee on the Global Information System to further explore integration and synergies between the GCCS and the Plant Treaty's Data Store and other components of the Global Information System (GLIS);

PART II: OTHER

24. **Requests** the Bureau of the Tenth Session to carry out the selection and appointment of members to the Executive Board of the Crop Trust to fill any vacancy that may arise before the Eleventh Session, in accordance with the Procedures for the Selection and Appointment of Members of the Executive Board of the Global Crop Diversity Trust.