

## Evaluation Management Response

**Evaluation title: CGIAR Genebank Platform Evaluation****Date Management Response provided to Advisory Services Shared Secretariat:**

15 January 2024

**The overall response to the evaluation:**

The report strongly endorses the achievements of the Genebank Platform, emphasizing the need for CGIAR and the Crop Trust to strategically work together, now more than ever. The Crop Trust agrees with the 11 recommendations identified by the reviewers and are delighted to see positive recognition of the mechanisms that were introduced and strengthened in the Genebank Platform.

The external review considered a number of issues that complemented the work on crop diversity conservation in genebanks, including PGR policy, GHUs, and the innovative approach of the communities of practice established within the Genebank Platform. It provides lessons on how to improve the work to promote an efficient goal-oriented, economically efficient, and sustainable global system of *ex situ* conservation within the policy framework of the Plant Treaty. The Crop Trust suggests that there should be a commitment to excellence to reach performance standards from center genebanks, with or without the incentive of support from the Endowment Fund. We are grateful for the recognition that the coordination and supportive monitoring and evaluation framework provided by the Crop Trust ensured strategic leadership and effective management of the Genebank Platform.

**Persons-in-charge for Follow-up to Management Response:**

Sarada Krishnan, Director of Programs, [sarada.krishnan@croptrust.org](mailto:sarada.krishnan@croptrust.org)

**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

(copied from the Evaluation Report):

**Recommendation 1: CGIAR should continue to recognize the importance of CGIAR genebanks and the responsibility and obligations that CGIAR carries in respect of the ITPGRFA and for the future of biodiversity on earth; and to fully support genebanks:**

- a. Ensure effective coordination across CGIAR.
  - Continue the integrated approach of genebanks improvement including, inter alia, external peer review of processes and units, quality management systems (QMS) and CoPs.
  - Work toward a more harmonized approach to database management tools such as GRIN-Global to meet the needs of all centers, particularly in clonal crops.
- b. Provide a single point of coordination and leadership to ensure effective system-wide support and to achieve better visibility of genebanks globally.
- c. Develop a strategy at the CGIAR system level and across Centers to support succession planning for genebanks staff complementing existing efforts at the individual genebanks level.

**Management Response**

*Fully agree*

*Partially agree*

*Do not agree*

**Management Response (commentary):**

The Crop Trust recognizes the importance of CGIAR genebanks in the global system of crop diversity conservation. It is part of our core mission to support the collections of unique and valuable plant genetic resources for food and agriculture held in genebanks.

**Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:**

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 2: Funders and CGIAR should ensure adequate and reliable funding.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. For routine operations and infrastructure, ideally a large proportion of this funding will be ring-fenced, recognizing the inflexibility of the core needs of the genebanks.</li> <li>b. Costing scenarios should be periodically updated to reflect changes in operations.</li> <li>c. Invest to improve operational efficiency. Where research indicates that investment can increase effectiveness and efficiency, uplift funding should be made available based on an appropriate technical proposal and business plan.</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
<p>The 2030 Strategic Plan of the Crop Trust describes our goal to provide long-term financial assistance for the essential operations to all Article 15 collections and additional genebanks holding crop diversity collections in the multilateral system that have been identified as unique and of global significance, meet agreed performance standards, and require external funding.</p> <p>The Crop Trust recognizes the need for periodic update of genebank costs.</p>		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 3:</b> CGIAR and Crop Trust should work together to strategically identify and ensure a coordinated approach to the many common goals including funding, visibility, and the development of non-CGIAR genebanks.		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
<p>The Crop Trust supports the coordinated approach to ensure the long-term conservation and availability of crop diversity. While the international collection of the CGIAR remain to be the highest priority for long-term support, we continue to engage with other partners, non-CGIAR and national genebanks, to promote an efficient goal-oriented, economically efficient, and sustainable global system of <i>ex situ</i> conservation within the policy framework of the Plant Treaty.</p> <p>The MoU between the Crop Trust and CGIAR provides the framework for strategic collaboration. The monthly coordination meetings between the Crop Trust and the Genebank Initiative allows for a coordinated approach to the many common goals and in project implementation involving non-CGIAR genebanks.</p>		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Monthly coordination meetings, Annual genebank meeting, Annual planning meeting	Sarada Krishnan	Monthly, Annual	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Travel funds for face-to-face meetings
Review, implement, and update of MoU, as necessary	Stefan Thyen	As necessary	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Joint workshops and support for CGIAR genebanks and national partners	Janny van Beem, Matija Obreza	Annual	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Travel and meeting funds from projects
Continued participation of CGIAR staff in Crop Trust Executive Board, as non-voting members (and vice versa, e.g. System Council)	Stefan Schmitz, Sarada Krishnan	Annual	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Travel funds for face-to-face meetings

**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

(copied from the Evaluation Report):

**Recommendation 4: Policy**

CGIAR Policy Related to Plant Genetic Resources must remain under the same umbrella as the genebanks. It has both an outward and an inward-facing role and must be sufficiently resourced to achieve both. The Policy Module was introduced in the Platform in response to an identified gap in the CRP and became an indispensable part of the Platform.

**Management Response**

*Fully agree*

*Partially agree*

*Do not agree*

**Management Response (commentary):**

The Crop Trust supports keeping the CGIAR Policy Related to Plant Genetic Resources under the same umbrella as the genebanks. The Policy Module, introduced under the Genebank Platform and coordinated by the Crop Trust, paved the way for increased engagement and visibility in the international policy fora.

**Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:**

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 5: Support/collaborate with policy knowledge inside CGIAR beyond the genebanks.</b>		
<p>a. Knowledge of policy issues and awareness of their importance was achieved for genebanks under the Platform. Capacity building efforts must now expand beyond genebanks to other relevant stakeholders in the CGIAR system including breeders, biotechnologists, and information technology specialists. Information and training materials require regular updates in view of the evolving policy context.</p> <p>b. The Genebanks Initiative policy team should collaborate with other parts of the CGIAR system, including the other initiatives such as Nature Plus to provide a more comprehensive coverage of policy issues related to PGR.</p>		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
The Crop Trust supports the continued collaboration with PGR policy knowledge inside CGIAR and beyond the genebanks.		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 6: Policy- Ensure support to the policy function is commensurate with the breadth of expectations of the global community.</b> Reinforce CGIAR capacity through increased human resources within the policy team and/or appropriate networking with other parts of CGIAR working with policy related to PGR, to secure the existing expertise and networks. If more resources are assigned, it is proposed that they are distributed across different centers		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b> The Crop Trust agrees with the need to reinforce CGIAR capacity on PGR policy.		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 7: Policy- Increase explicit strategic consultations on policy with a wide range of external stakeholders.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The policy component should serve as the “sensory system” of CGIAR and should reinforce the ability to consult a wider section of stakeholders, identify the existing opportunities for the consultation, and design new mechanisms if gaps are identified. The policy team should strengthen anticipatory work on emerging and innovative topics (e.g., open-source seed).</li> <li>b. Consider reestablishment of the genetic resources policy group.</li> <li>c. In collaboration with partners, possibly including International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), carry out policy research on important policy-related issues such as Digital Sequence Information (DSI), benefit sharing and user tracking both to inform CGIAR on its own stance on key issues but also to inform international policy fora.</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/></span>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
The Crop Trust agrees with the need to reinforce the strategic consultations on policy with a wide range of external stakeholders.		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 8: Use - Adopt a wider definition of users when designing outreach programs.</b>		
This should include users whose focus is to enhance the conservation and use of genetic diversity in situ—as noted in the Genebank Proposal. This would better address the System Level Outcome (SLO): “improving natural resources systems and ecosystem services”.		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
The Crop Trust agrees with the need to adopt a wider definition of users. Maintaining crop diversity in natural areas and on farms ( <i>in situ</i> ) is vital for the sustainability, resilience and health of our food supply, and complements <i>ex situ</i> conservation.		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

**RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:**

(copied from the Evaluation Report):

**Recommendation 9: Use - Expand efforts to encourage and facilitate the use of genebank collections.**

- a. Improve data curation to ensure CGIAR and other breeders’ confidence in data published in Genesys and Digital Object Identifier (DOI).
- b. Enhance the functionality of Genesys to become a more useful tool for breeders, not only for the genebank community, and build confidence through a quality assurance system.
- c. Identify and address breeders’ needs for more detailed data (possibly through a synergy with the Germinate software as envisioned in the Divseek initiative).
- d. Establish a working group to review IT needs of CGIAR genebanks. This group can include genebank managers, breeders, and data experts who are at arm’s length from the Crop Trust IT team, to avoid conflicts of interest.
- e. Ensure funding for the wider evaluation of collections including phenotypic and molecular of high potential material areas of study to be decided in conjunction with researchers and breeders to maximize value of the accessions to all users.

**Management Response**

*Fully agree*

*Partially agree*

*Do not agree*

**Management Response (commentary):**

The Crop Trust recognizes the need for continuous improvement in genebank data management tools, also data curation and publishing, to promote and facilitate the use of genebank collections, with GGCE as the primary database of each genebank and Genesys as the public interface. Both platforms have quality assurance system involving data checkpoints, audit logs, data validation, and review processes.

We agree that there is a need to continue to enhance Genesys functionality to make it more useful for breeders. The genebank information systems team at the Crop Trust will support the efforts of the Use Module of the Genebank Initiative in developing Genesys tools that are applicable to the needs of breeders.

We agree that more detailed data, already existing in genebanks, should be published also in Genesys.

We agree that a working group within the CGIAR to review the IT needs of the CGIAR genebanks would be beneficial to the Genebank Initiative and beyond. When this working group is established, the genebank information systems team at the Crop Trust is open for consultation and collaboration on genebank IT matters.

We agree with the need for more phenotypic and molecular data to be generated and shared on Genesys to maximize value of the accessions to breeders and other users.

**Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:**

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
Improvement of Genesys functionality	Matija Obreza	Continuously	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	The Crop Trust provides core funding for maintenance and improvements to Genesys. Major development requires additional funding.
Improvement of GGCE functionality	Matija Obreza	Continuously	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	The Crop Trust provides core funding for maintenance and improvement of baseline GGCE. New, major development and/or center-tailored development require additional funding.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>		
(copied from the Evaluation Report):		
<b>Recommendation 10: Review Scientific Impact of the Communities of Practice - they represent an innovative approach which may be an exemplary model for organizations beyond CGIAR.</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CGIAR should conduct a review of the full scientific impact of the eight CoPs including their contribution to the effectiveness and efficiency of genebanks, to learn lessons from the successes of the CoPs during the Platform.</li> <li>b. Identify and give special attention to prospects for increasing the dissemination of lessons learned, and expanding group membership to external scientists, thereby further extending the international impact and reach of CGIAR</li> </ul>		
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>		
The Crop Trust agrees with the recommendation.		
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>		

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS and ACTIONS:</b>			
(copied from the Evaluation Report):			
<b>Recommendation 11: Ensure stable and coordinated support to Germplasm Health Units.</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CGIAR GHUs have very similar roles and are necessarily geographically distributed. GHUs need continuous investment to provide a consistent service and respond to changes in the phytosanitary and policy environment.</li> <li>b. Like genebanks, institute a consistent cost-recovery system for the core functions of the GHUs to ensure that they receive an appropriate fee for their services. At present, GHU funding is far from adequate or consistent year-to-year.</li> <li>c. Maintain the coordination mechanism for GHUs to ensure that their voices are consistently listened to. This may include a coordinator with a part- or full-time role to support them and ensure their continued development.</li> <li>d. Ensure that GHUs have sufficient resources to deal with potential increased workload due to new pathogens and the effects of climate change.</li> </ul>			
<b>Management Response</b>	<i>Fully agree</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Partially agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Do not agree</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Management Response (commentary):</b>			
The Crop Trust agrees with the recommendation.			
<b>Brief explanatory statement if recommendation is rejected or partially accepted:</b>			

Management Follow-up					
Actions to be implemented	Responsible <sup>1</sup>	Timeframe	Is additional funding required to implement the recommendation		If further funding required – how much and what is to be done if no funds available?
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	