



Genebank
Platform



**IEA Evaluation of Genebank CRP
Responses of the Crop Trust and the CRP Management Team
5 May 2017**

External reviews contribute to building successful programmes of work by providing constructive criticism, recognition of achievements and opportunity for self-assessment. The IEA evaluation and report succeeded in providing all of these elements. Further, the IEA evaluation was able to consider a number of issues that went beyond the mandate of the Genebank CRP (e.g. communications and policy). The evaluation came at an unfortunate time that prevented the findings from being shared before the Genebank Platform proposal was drafted and approved. However, the consequences of this are few since the recommendations correspond strongly with the objectives set out and adjustments made in the development of the Platform. Indeed, several of the recommendations have been already fully or partially addressed.

The report strongly endorses the achievements of the Genebank CRP and directions in which the Genebank Platform is going. The Platform Management Team (MT) and the Crop Trust share the views of the reviewers in the majority of their findings and are delighted to see positive recognition of the mechanisms that were introduced or strengthened through the Crop Trust's coordination – the online reporting tool, genebank financial and technical reviews, funded Recommendation Action Plans, Annual Genebank Meeting, GRIN-Global, Genesys and the Quality Management System programme.

One of the points reiterated by the reviewers in their report is that the secure funding of the CRP was key to its success. It is clear to the Crop Trust and Platform management that the CRP provided essential means by which the Centers were able to invest in the staff, facilities and operations of the genebanks in a way that they have not been able to do before, focussing on shared standards, targets and specific recommended actions. Importantly this allowed them to address some of the multitude of bottlenecks and backlogs that lie hidden but accumulate to become critical issues¹. These are the kinds of issues that would fail to receive attention and funding without the special mechanism that the CRP provided and the spotlight shone on all corners of the genebanks through the unique partnership with the Crop Trust. It is truly gratifying that the reviewers have recognized these points and that they see the need for the Crop Trust to be viewed as a “valuable strategic partner, rather than just a manager.”

¹ Such critical issues were the focus of World Bank funding as part of the two “Global Public Goods” projects ending in 2008

Evaluation recommendation	Management response to the recommendation	Management follow up			
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<p>Recommendation 1. The System Organization should contribute to the effective governance and management of the Genebank Platform, by consistently representing CGIAR on the Crop Trust Executive Board and the Genebank Platform Management Team</p>	<p>The Crop Trust and MT agree with the recommendation that the CGIAR should be consistently represented on the Crop Trust Executive Board. They would further suggest that the representative is an elected position over a period of at least three years with a responsibility, as with other EB members, to provide strategic support to the Crop Trust as an organization. This position should not be considered to have a liaison role or to take the place of direct interactions between the Crop Trust and the CGIAR executive bodies.</p> <p>The Genebank Platform Management Team has a much stronger balance of CGIAR constituents than the Team set up in the CRP proposal. Currently it has six representatives of the CGIAR and two of the Crop Trust. It is the MT's majority view that the participation of the SMO as a full member is not essential and that their continued membership should be reviewed given the revised role of the SMO with regards to science leadership.</p>	<p>1.1 Crop Trust to follow up with SMB Chair to request a representative of the CGIAR be appointed for a three-year period to the Crop Trust Executive Board.</p> <p>1.2 Platform Coordinator to follow up with SMO regarding their participation in the MT.</p>	<p>Crop Trust/SMB Chair</p> <p>Crop Trust/SMO</p>	6 months	Zero
<p>Recommendation 2. The Crop Trust Executive Board should</p>	<p>The long-term support provided to ex situ conservation are core to the Crop Trust's</p>	<p>2.1 The long-term roles and responsibilities of the Crop Trust</p>	Crop Trust/SMB	12 months	Zero

¹ This column is completed based on the assumption that funds will be provided for the approved budget of the Genebank Platform.

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execute a clearly defined role practicing its responsibilities in the oversight and governance of the Genebank Platform, distinguishing this role from its governing role for the Crop Trust, particularly with regard to Platform funding, its allocation, and use, and it should report the status regularly to CGIAR.	mission and thus its role in leading the Genebank Platform is a central activity that is purposely well integrated within the Crop Trust's program of scientific work. The CRP/Platform activities are presented as such to the Crop Trust Executive Board. However, there are elements of governance that the EB should exert specifically for the Genebank Platform and these elements should be clearly identified. The Crop Trust considers that the EB has a role in providing oversight of the financial management of the Genebank Platform.	and CGIAR System Organization with respect to the management of the genebanks will be framed within a Memorandum of Understanding, strengthening the existing relationship that is embedded within the long-term grant agreements between the Crop Trust and individual CGIAR Centers. 2.2 Based on the Genebank Platform proposal, a further detailed document will be drafted and shared to describe the governance and management roles and responsibilities of the different Genebank Platform entities.			
Recommendation 3. Given the shortcomings in the original Costing Study, and despite difficulties encountered earlier, the Genebank Platform management should give high priority to revisiting the Parity Study to establish realistic and transparent budget for each Center genebank.	The Crop Trust and MT agree strongly with this recommendation with the proviso that the scope and objectives of the study are defined so as to avoid any misunderstanding with the term "Parity Study". As described in the Genebank Platform proposal, one of the objectives of the Conservation Module (p.35. Objective 1.2.3) is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of costs and efficiencies.	3.1 A cost analysis study will be designed in 2017 and implemented over the course of 2018-2019.	MT	2017-2020	Zero

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Recommendation 4. The Genebank Platform management should subject all fund allocation proposals for approval by the Management Team, and ensure that all decisions on fund allocation are recorded in Management Team meeting minutes and available to Centers and genebank managers in order to maintain a high level of trust and transparency.	The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation and have been implementing such a fund allocation process since the initiation of the Genebank Platform	No further action planned	MT	Recommended action already taken	
Recommendation 5. Given that the Genebank Platform is not a research program and that its mandate and aims are different from those of the CRPs, tailor-made reporting format needs to be agreed for the Platform. Therefore the Genebank Platform management and the CGIAR System Management Office should, at the earliest opportunity, agree on bespoke reporting needs and format to serve CGIAR and the wider genetic resources community better.	The Crop Trust and MT strongly agree with this recommendation. The SMO have been accommodating in allowing the reports from the Genebank CRP and now Platform to deviate from the standard format. However, it is our opinion that a specialised format to give emphasis to the status and use of the genebanks on a Center-by-Center basis, as well as the proposed Platform activities would significantly strengthen the reports.	5.1 The MT will ask SMO to consider a specialised reporting format for the Genebank Platform.	MT/SMO	6 months	Zero
Recommendation 6. The Crop Trust should incentivize and empower the Genebank Platform	The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation, although it is important to understand the integral connection	6.1 A Genebank Platform website has been developed and will be launched in 2017. A	Crop Trust	6 months	Zero

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<p>management to promote the Platform independently from the Crop Trust's own communications, in order to ensure that a comprehensive communications strategy is developed to promote the visibility and accountability of the Platform and the CGIAR genebanks. Furthermore, the Genebank Platform Management Team should use the communications strategy effectively for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the work, progress and achievements of the Genebank Platform and its component modules; • Promoting cross-Center activities, details about germplasm exchange, and use of Standard Material Transfer Agreements; • Publishing minutes from the Genebank Platform meetings, including the Annual Genebank Managers meeting; and • Supporting recognition of the historic and current efforts of the CGIAR Centers as some of the 	<p>between the Crop Trust's communications to raise funds for the endowment and the stated objectives of the original Genebanks CRP. The importance of raising the profile of the individual genebanks themselves is a long-term activity and will always take precedence, in our opinion, to the needs for raising awareness about the Platform. We agree, however, that there is a recognised need to disseminate news, reports and information on the Platform. A Genebank Platform web site has been developed and will be launched this year.</p>	<p>communication strategy for the Genebank Platform will be drafted and discussed at the Annual Genebank Meeting in September.</p>			

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main custodians of genetic resources worldwide.					
<p>Recommendation 7. Given that the Quality Management System has become a key mechanism for enhancing genebank operations, the Genebank Platform should build on this success by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling lessons learned from Quality Management System to operationalize the FAO Genebanks Standards into easily implementable approaches and procedures, and report regularly to the FAO Commission on their use which would help genebanks worldwide to enhance their performance; • Determining, at the earliest opportunity, if external validation of Quality Management System is needed and if so, what form it should take, and to whom such a validation role might be assigned. 	<p>The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation. Feedback on the use of FAO Genebank Standards was provided to the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) in December 2016. The response received from the Commission was positive and we will continue to interact with them as they develop a mechanism for reviewing and revising the 2014 FAO Standards.</p> <p>The program for QMS phase 2 is being developed and external validation of the individual Centers QMS is considered an essential element of this next phase.</p>	<p>7.1 The programme for QMS Phase 2 will be shared with all stakeholders and partners.</p>	MT	Recommended action already taken.	Zero
<p>Recommendation 8. Use of germplasm for research and crop</p>	The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation. Both actions are	<p>8.1 Workplans to be implemented as part of the Genebank Platform</p>	MT and Center genebanks	Use Module to be implemented	Zero

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<p>improvement requires access to germplasm that has been adequately characterized and evaluated for resistance to and tolerance of biotic and abiotic stresses. In its future data development efforts, the Genebank Platform management should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance linkages between genebank characterization and breeders' evaluation and pedigree data; and • Expand the utility of GRIN-Global more specifically for in vitro collections. 	<p>addressed in the Genebank Platform proposal (p.34. Conservation Module objective 1.2.1 and p. 51 Use Module objective 2.1.1.) and are included in approved 2017 workplans (GRIN-Global & Use Module workplans) for implementation by Center genebanks over the course of the next six years. GRIN-Global is already being used for in vitro collections.</p>			2017-2022	
<p>Recommendation 9. For ensuring CGIAR's effective engagement in genetic resources policy dialogues and regular representation at international fora, the FAO Commission and the Governing Body of the International Treaty in particular, the System Management Board should oversee that the System Organization, Centers, and the Crop Trust as manager of the Genebank Platform clearly define and agree on their respective roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation. The Crop Trust will not represent the CGIAR in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) or the Convention on Biological Diversity. It is the role of the Policy Module to facilitate the representation of the CGIAR. The reporting of the Policy Module to the SMB and General Assembly is now well established. The Crop Trust Executive Board made clear that they have no role in overseeing the governance of the Policy Module at their meeting in March 2017.</p>	<p>9.1 Based on the Genebank Platform proposal, a further detailed document will be drafted and shared to describe the governance and management roles and responsibilities of the Genebank Platform entities. The reporting lines of these entities will also be clearly defined.</p>	<p>Crop Trust/SMB/Centers/Policy Module</p>	6 months	Zero

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regarding representation of CGIAR internationally, taking into consideration that the Genebank Platform's policy module reports to the System Management Board/General Assembly.					
Recommendation 10. Given that close linkages between the Genebank Platform and the Excellence in Breeding and Big Data Platforms will be essential for strengthening genetic conservation and use, the Genebank Platform Management Team should agree with the managements of the other two Platforms appropriate protocols for data exchange and use. This coordination will take advantage of CGIAR's unique position of spanning the whole range of activities from conservation to use, and minimize the Platforms developing as silos in isolation from one another.	<p>The Crop Trust and MT agree with this recommendation, although it should be noted that protocols for data exchange and use are primarily determined by Center implementation of CGIAR Open Access policy.</p> <p>Linkages are being carefully forged between the three Platforms. Genebank Platform representatives have been appointed to and are participating in the Expert Groups in the Excellence in Breeding Platform and joint activities are being planned with the Big Data Platform.</p>	10.1 MT will continue to oversee the healthy linkages and exchanges between the Genebank Platform and the other Platforms and AFS-CRPS.	MT	2017-2022	Zero
Recommendation 11. Given the broader mandate of the Genebank Platform compared to the Genebanks CRP, the Crop Trust	The roles of the Platform Coordinator, the members of the MT and leaders of collective activities have expanded to address the broader Genebank Platform	No further actions to planned	Crop Trust and MT	Recommended action already taken	Zero

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Executive Board should ensure strong strategic leadership and vision for the Genebank Platform either through establishing an additional position (of a Platform Manager) to those currently described in the Platform proposal or by expanding the role of the Platform Coordinator.	<p>objectives (incl. Policy and Germplasm Health Units).</p> <p>Strategic leadership and vision is provided by the MT and scientific leadership is further provided by genebank managers and specialist staff. Neither is invested in a single leader. This we believe is an essential point. The Crop Trust, in the form of the Platform Coordinator and other members of the Crop Trust Science Team, provides highly effective facilitation and coordination within the Genebank Platform and in related initiatives beyond. The vision and leadership of the Platform comes from the effective aggregation of ideas and ambitions of the genebank managers, staff, reviewers and partners. This form of partnership has proven highly effective in the CRP.</p>				