CALL FOR TENDER – Crowdfunding Feasibility Study

1. Background

The Global Crop Diversity Trust ('Crop Trust') was established in 2004 by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization and the CGIAR agricultural research consortium and is an independent organization under international law. The Crop Trust is an essential element of the funding strategy of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, which now counts 148 contracting parties.

The Crop Trust's core mission is to promote an efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective global system to conserve the diversity of our food and agricultural crops. The organization focuses on ex-situ collections of major crops vital for global food security. Thus, the Crop Trust plays an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 2 and Target 2.5. For further information on the Crop Trust, please visit the website at www.croptrust.org. The Crop Trust’s governance documents can also be found on our website (https://www.croptrust.org/resources/#governance-policy)

To achieve its mandate of securing crop diversity, the Crop Trust has established an Endowment Fund. The Crop Trust Endowment Fund generates investment income which is used to finance crop conservation activities around the world. An endowment fund worth USD 850 million would generate enough investment income to support the following elements forever:

- International crop collections under Article 15 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA),
- Globally important national and regional collections,
- The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, including ongoing operations of the Vault and support for genebanks to send back-up collections to the Vault,
- Secretariat Operations of the Crop Trust in Bonn,
- Information Systems to improve the availability and use of crop collections.

These five core activities of the Crop Trust should be funded through sustainable investment income generated from the endowment fund. In addition, the Crop Trust raises project-based funding to provide targeted, time-limited support to partners for key priorities to further develop the global system of ex situ conservation.

Conventional, unrestricted grant contributions to the endowment fund will always be the preferred financing source for the global system of ex situ conservation. However, with governments' declining endowment fund contributions, the Crop Trust has taken on an ambitious and much-needed effort to develop more diverse funding channels to achieve the endowment target of USD 850 million.
Therefore, the mobilization of alternative financing sources from the public and private sectors is crucial. The UN and World Bank have identified 'crowdfunding' as one of these alternative financing options. In particular, donation-based crowdfunding is a fast-growing market, with an estimated value of $0.56 billion globally in 2016 and with high growth potential. Other crowdfunding options, like reward-based crowdfunding and debt-based crowdfunding, have also shown significant growth during the past years.

Given this context, the Crop Trust is seeking to contract a qualified and experienced service provider to explore the applicability and feasibility of various types of crowdfunding as an innovative funding tool for the Crop Trust. Possible target markets are Germany (+Austria and Switzerland), given that the Crop Trust is conducting a dedicated outreach strategy in these regions, as well as the US since this is the largest market for crowdfunding. The main focus of the study should be on donation-based, reward-based, and debt-based crowdfunding or any other (hybrid) model that could fit to the activities of the Crop Trust.

This crowdfunding feasibility study is part of a project in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), funded through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and entitled 'Strategic Development of the Global Crop Diversity Trust'. Further information on this project can be found in the Blog: "Germany Supports the Crop Trust to Safeguard and Use Crop Diversity Globally".

The service provider will report to Hannes Dempewolf, the Director of External Affairs at the Crop Trust, and will work closely with the Crop Trust's Finance and External Affairs teams, as well as relevant GIZ staff.

2. The objective of the Assignment

The Crop Trust seeks a Service Provider to present a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of crowdfunding approaches globally. This assessment will include the following activities:

1) An assessment showcasing the different types of crowdfunding that may be relevant to the Crop Trust's resource mobilization efforts and reasons as to why (or not) specific approaches/initiatives/campaigns are recommended or considered feasible (or not).

2) A landscape study of relevant markets, audiences, and competitors for the crowdfunding approaches deemed most feasible and suitable.

3) A comparison of two to three examples of crowdfunding approaches of other nonprofit organisations that include targets and markets of relevance to the Crop Trust's resource mobilization efforts.

4) A monitoring and evaluation system including key indicators and success factors to monitor and assess the possible success of an ongoing campaign.

5) Recommendations and ‘best-practices’ for the crowdfunding approaches deemed most feasible for the Crop Trust, including but not limited to:
   a. Detailed analysis of possible rewards and returns of a crowdfunding campaign over a determined time period.
   b. Detailed risk analysis (including reputational risks).
   c. A detailed implementation plan of each of the crowdfunding initiatives deemed most feasible.

6) An overview of the main considerations and decisions that need to be taken pre-implementation (i.e., operations, legal, regulatory, tax, governance, political and reputational) also against the legal status of the Crop Trust as an international organisation;
7) An estimate of the costs for internal and external resources required to set up and implement crowdfunding (financial, staffing, etc.)
8) A brief assessment of suitable crowdfunding platforms (including a brief explanation of the technical aspects) and recommendations for engagement with such platforms
9) An overview of how an international crowdfunding campaign and platform could be used as a communications and engagement tool in support of institutional communications campaigning and outreach.
10) Concrete recommendations on how to use and leverage existing communications assets to best implement an international crowdfunding campaign, and which additional institutional resources, including costs, would be necessary to execute a crowdfunding campaign.

This study should ultimately provide all the information needed to decide how to proceed with a crowdfunding initiative.

3. Scope of Work and Deliverables

The consultant will undertake the feasibility study through participatory processes with appropriate stakeholders, based on the objectives set out in Section 2 above. Under the current circumstances of COVID-19, it is expected that this work will be performed remotely with virtual meetings. A final dissemination workshop at the Crop Trust's headquarters in Bonn can be considered, COVID-19 institutional policies and relevant travel restrictions permitting.

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the Service Provider to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- The specific activities to be conducted
- A timeline for the activities
- Milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- A detailed budget along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

4. Qualifications

The service provider is required to meet the following criteria:

- Proven experience working on crowdfunding mechanisms for social/impact investments and bringing together the private and public sectors
- Proven experience in working on similar feasibility studies
- Track record in investment consulting roles with other international organisations and the nonprofit sector
- Strong communication skills

5. Timeframe

The feasibility study must be concluded and presented to Crop Trust management by 15 December 2021.

6. Offer
As highlighted above, it is expected that this work will be performed remotely with virtual meetings and workshops, so the Offer should exclude travel and related costs. If there are to be meetings held in-person in Bonn, Germany, please separately indicate the travel costs associated with any proposed in-person meetings included in your proposal.

The Crop Trust has tax-exempt status in Germany and is eligible to claim back VAT directly from the Government. Please indicate clearly in your proposal if you will accept our tax-exempt status by not charging VAT, and please budget accordingly. If you cannot accept our tax exemption, the assessment of your Offer will be based on gross amounts. Assessments of quotes from German companies are generally based on offers excluding VAT.

Please include in your Offer:
- The names and biographies of those who would be responsible for the work described
- Examples of previous work in each of the activities listed in your Offer
- An explanation of how the provider would like to conduct the feasibility study
- References and testimonials
- The signed Declaration of Undertaking
- The signed and filled out Supplier Self-Assessment.

This Offer will be evaluated considering at least the following points:
- Cost;
- Quality of previous work;
- Relevant previous experience working with international organizations who raised funds for social/impact investments;
- Availability;
- Technical capabilities.

Please also note that this Request for Proposal (RFP) is not an offer. The Crop Trust is under no obligation to accept any proposal submitted under this RFP, nor is it obliged to select or appoint any service provider pursuant to this RFP. All costs and expenses associated with or incurred in responding to this RFP shall be borne by the Bidder. The Crop Trust shall not be liable for any such costs or expenses or any claim for reimbursement of such costs or expenses.

7. Submission

Proposals are due via email as a PDF file to procurement@croptrust.org by midnight (CEST) on 20 September 2021. Questions on the RFP can be sent to procurement@croptrust.org before 13 September 2021 (23:59 CEST). Shortlisted candidates will be asked to present their proposals and answer questions virtually.
Annex 1

Germany Supports the Crop Trust to Safeguard and Use Crop Diversity Globally