

26 July 2017

To: Independent Evaluation Arrangement (“IEA”)  
From: System Management Board (“Board”)

## Management response to the IEA Evaluation of the Genebanks CRP

### A. Commentary

1. The Board recognizes the unique added value of the CGIAR Genebanks CRP to conserve the diversity of plant genetic resources (PGR) in CGIAR-held collections and to make this diversity available to breeders and researchers in a manner that meets high international scientific standards and consistent with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). The Board therefore welcomes the IEA’s Evaluation of the Genebanks CRP which it believes provides some useful insights and recommendations, noting however a potentially missed opportunity to consider a possible broader international role for CGIAR, in supporting and scientifically underpinning a truly global system for conserving and making available all crop genetic diversity.
2. Given that the recommendations are targeted at various levels and entities including the CGIAR System Organization, the Global Crop Diversity Trust (“Crop Trust”), the Genebank Platform Management Team (“Management Team”), this management response has been organized accordingly.
3. The Board has responded to those recommendations aimed directly at System Organization (Category A includes Recommendations 1, 5 and 9) in terms of ‘levels of acceptance’, while commenting on those recommendations aimed at other entities (Category B- Crop Trust and Management Team includes Recs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10 & 11).
4. In so doing, the Board has taken into account the management response submitted to this evaluation by the Crop Trust as the lead organization for the previous Genebanks CRP and now Genebank Platform, as it has formulated its own responses. The Board agrees with the evaluation that the Crop Trust should be viewed as a “valuable strategic partner, rather than just a manager” and aims to prioritize actions that can enhance this.
5. Specific attention will be paid by the Board to the following areas:
  - a. Strengthening the interaction of the System Organization towards improved effectiveness of both Governance and Management of the Platform (Rec 1).
  - b. Appropriate design of new templates for planning and reporting in the context of the development of the Results Based Management (RBM) Framework for CGIAR Research, which is being done collaboratively with actors across the System, so that it will optimally serve Genebank Platform reporting (Rec. 5).
  - c. Ensuring CGIAR’s effective engagement in genetic resources policy dialogues and regular representation at international fora, by clearly defining roles and responsibilities regarding representation of CGIAR internationally, taking into consideration the Genebank Platform’s policy module (Rec. 9).

## B. Responses and Action Plan

### Category A: Recommendations under the mandate of the System Management Board

Evaluation Recommendation	Management Response by the Board	Action(s) to be taken by the Board	A: Accountability R: Responsibility	Timing	Funding implications
<p><b>Recommendation 1.</b> The <u>System Organization</u> 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><b>Accepted</b></p>	<p>1.1 With delegated authority by the System Management Board, the Interim Chair took the decision to appoint Ann Tutwiler to serve as the CGIAR representative on the Crop Trust Executive Board for a one year term until 31 March 2018.</p> <p>1.2 At its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting the Board delegated to the Executive Director, as ex-officio member, to determine the participation in the Genebank Platform Management Team and make any appointments.</p>	<p>A: Board R: Chair</p> <p>A: Board R: Executive Director</p>	<p>SMB5, March 2017; March 2018.</p> <p>Q3-4</p>	<p>Modest funding implications: To support the participation of an individual in Crop Trust Board meetings and the Genebank Platform Management Team meetings</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5.</b> The Genebank Platform management and the <u>CGIAR System Management Office</u> should, at the earliest opportunity, agree on bespoke reporting needs and format to serve CGIAR and the wider genetic resources community better.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b> <i>Explanation: A new reporting format is currently being developed which will include the Platforms. To optimally capture the work and achievements of the Genebank Platform any additional reporting can be considered.</i></p>	<p>5.1 The Board will take into consideration whether the new reporting formats optimally capture the information needed on the Genebank Platform.</p>	<p>A: Board R: System Management Office</p>	<p>Q3-4</p>	<p>No additional funding implications</p>

Evaluation Recommendation	Management Response by the Board	Action(s) to be taken by the Board	A: Accountability R: Responsibility	Timing	Funding implications
<p><b>Recommendation 9.</b> 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 <u>System Management Board</u> 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 regarding representation of CGIAR internationally, taking into consideration that the Genebank Platform’s policy module reports to the System Management Board/General Assembly.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b></p>	<p>9.1 The System Organization will make use of a formal resource developed for the Board to frame the long-term roles and responsibilities regarding representation of CGIAR internationally.</p>	<p>A: Board R: System Management Office</p>	<p>Q3-4 2017</p>	<p>No additional funding implications</p>

Category B: Recommendations directed to the **Global Crop Diversity Trust and Genebank Platform Management**

Evaluation Recommendation	Comments by the System Management Board
<p><b>Recommendation 2.</b> The <u>Crop Trust Executive Board</u> should 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.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3.</b> Given the shortcomings in the original Costing Study, and despite difficulties encountered earlier, the <u>Genebank Platform management</u> should give high priority to revisiting the Parity Study to establish realistic and transparent budget for each Center Genebank.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b> <i>Note: The Board recommends the early design and implementation of an updated cost analysis study to be presented to the Board before the end of 2017.</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4.</b> The <u>Genebank Platform management</u> 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.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 6.</b> <u>The Crop Trust</u> should incentivize and empower the Genebank Platform 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.</p>	<p><b>Supported</b> <i>Note: The Board encourages the strengthening of efforts and channels to disseminate news, reports and information on the Genebank Platform and concurs that better visibility of system wide endeavors is needed to demonstrate the value of W1-2 money allocation to plant genetic resource conservation and dissemination. The launch of an attractive website for the former CRP and now Genebank Platform is welcomed.</i></p>

Evaluation Recommendation	Comments by the System Management Board
<p><b>Recommendation 7.</b> Given that the Quality Management System(QMS) has become a key mechanism for enhancing Genebank operations, the <u>Genebank Platform</u> should build on this success by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compiling lessons learned from Quality Management System to operationalize the FAO Genebank Standards into easily implementable approaches and procedures, and report regularly to the FAO Commission on their use which would help Genebank worldwide to enhance their performance;</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supported</b> <i>Note: The Board recognizes that QMS is a successful initiative started in phase 1 (2012-16) and being continued in phase 2. The Board strongly recommends paying particular attention to: (1) the external validation of the individual Centers QMS, considered an essential element of this next phase; and (2) the alignment of the QMS indicators with the overall Genebank Platform performance indicators to be included in the planning and reporting annual documents.</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 8.</b> Use of germplasm for research and crop 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 <u>Genebank Platform management</u> should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance linkages between Genebank characterization and breeders' evaluation and pedigree data; and</li> <li>• Expand the utility of GRIN-Global more specifically for in vitro collections.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supported</b> <i>Note: The Board notes that both actions are planned to be addressed through: (1) the Conservation Module objective; and (2) the Use Module objective and are reflected in the POWB 2017 and the full proposal for 2017-22.</i></p>
<p><b>Recommendation 10.</b> 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 <u>Genebank Platform Management Team</u> 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>	<p><b>Supported</b> <i>Note: Even if protocols for data exchange and use are primarily determined by Center implementation of CGIAR Open Access policy, the Board emphasizes the expected key role to be played by the Genebank Platform in connecting and articulating exchange of data and information between the three Platforms. These efforts will be reported in the respective Platform Annual Reports.</i></p>

Evaluation Recommendation	Comments by the System Management Board
<p><b>Recommendation 11.</b>            Given the broader mandate of the Genebank Platform compared to the Genebanks CRP, the <u>Crop Trust Executive Board</u> 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 (PC).</p>	<p><b>Supported</b>  <i>Note: As strong strategic leadership and vision for the Genebank Platform is important, the Board proposes that the following principles, amongst others, be considered to achieve this, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Clear definition of roles, responsibilities and skills for leadership positions</i></li> <li>• <i>Ability to put in place effective facilitation and coordination within the Genebank Platform</i></li> <li>• <i>Focus on promoting and strengthening a collaborative approach with the other Platforms and Agri-Food System CRP scientists for the success of the new Portfolio.</i></li> </ul>