

MEETING REPORT

Expert Consultation Meeting on Global Crop Conservation Strategies

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An expert consultation meeting of conservation scientists was held at the Crop Trust office in Bonn, Germany during 14-15 October, 2019. The main objective of this meeting was to finalize the technical details for development of a comprehensive project on global conservation strategies. The meeting was attended by representatives from IPK, Germany; USDA ARS, USA; FAO, Italy; INIA, Chile; VIR, Russia; ECPGR, Italy; IITA, Nigeria; BGCI, UK and ICAR-NBPGR, New Delhi. The Crop Trust, over a period of past 10-12 years, has compiled 27 crop-specific documents in which, status and required strategies for conservation have been charted out. However, it is evident that the existing documents have been reduced to ‘archives’ and there is a need to revisit them and add new crops to the list, based on the global germplasm exchange and utilization priorities. The ITPGRFA secretariat was also involved in the current meeting and it was conveyed that the revised strategy documents will be utilized as a tool

for consolidating and updating information on availability and access to plant genetic resources, as per the Treaty mandate. During the meeting an overview was made of the existing 27 strategies, and the diversity tree approach followed in the case of cassava conservation document was taken as the acceptable model for preparing the revised documents. A thorough discussion was held on the list of crops that were to be identified for the new documents. The selection criteria were primarily based on global germplasm demand and exchange data available in literature. Consequently, the following crops were finalized for preparation of the new conservation strategy documents –

1. Cucurbitaceous crops (cucumbers, watermelons, squashes, pumpkins as well as a number of ‘minor’ crops)
2. Citrus crops (oranges, lemons, grapefruit, limes as well as a number of ‘minor’ crops)



Participants of expert consultation meeting of conservation scientists held at Crop Trust in Bonn, Germany during 14-15 October 2019

3. Sunflower
4. Temperate forages (grass and legume species that originate from – and are used in – temperate and subtropical regions of the world)
5. Groundnut
6. Eggplant (cultivated species predominantly found in Africa and Asia)

For updating the existing strategies, potato, yams, sorghum and Vigna were identified.

With regard to the scope of the strategies, the group agreed that the new and revised strategies should include information on the following: - Economic, nutritional, agronomic value of crops; Eco-geographic information on the crops and their wild relatives; Molecular characterization data whenever available; Assessment of threats, vulnerability etc. both in situ and ex situ; Identification of gaps, completeness,

representativeness, uniqueness of collections, using the diversity tree approach; Security aspect of collections (safety duplication status and approaches etc.); Structure and management of collections; Conservation standards for each crop (including descriptor); Priority conservation actions and targets (including consideration of population genetics parameters); Accessibility and availability of collections by diversity of users (including farmers, NGO's, breeders, scientists etc.); Information on holdings of genetic stocks, pre-bred materials and other types of 'Material under Development'; Information from private collections and 'non-traditional' collections holders, whenever possible; Research priorities for conservation; Phytosanitary issues and their impact on conservation and distribution (and how to overcome such barriers). It was decided that the meeting will be followed by crop-specific workshops, wherein further discussions will be held.