

Press Release, 1 July 2021

## Germplasm Expert Working Group appoints new chairs with new vision for community



*Image: Farmer Ahmed El Amri. On-farm trials of CWR-derived elite lines in Marchouch, Morocco. Part of the pre-breeding and evaluation component of the CWR Project ([www.cwrdiversity.org](http://www.cwrdiversity.org)). Photo Credit: Michael Major/Crop Trust*

(Berlin) The Wheat Initiative's Expert Working Group on Global Wheat Germplasm Conservation and Use (Germplasm-EWG) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Benjamin Kilian, Dr. Shivali Sharma, Dr. Peter Civaň and Prof. Hakan Özkan, as its new chairs. They will be assuming leadership from Dr. Ahmed Amri, ICARDA-Morocco, and Dr. Thomas Payne, CIMMYT-Mexico, who served in the position for the last seven years.

"We are grateful to Ahmed and Tom for their great support and lifelong work to improve wheat conservation and use," says Dr. Kilian of the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

The Germplasm-EWG facilitates communication between germplasm collection holders and users, identifies current challenges, provides support for developing and implementing solutions and offers direction to the wheat plant genetic resources community around the globe.



The new co-chairs share a vision to bring together the entire wheat plant genetic resources community and act as a discussion platform and information hub. In this central role, they plan to link international and national genebanks, breeders, farmers, researchers, and all others who have an interest in the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for wheat improvement.

As one of the first steps, they aim to update the existing Global Wheat Conservation Strategy, including its use dimensions using modern tools and technologies. The expert working group will also carry out global assessments, seek out and consolidate technical advice, and offer recommendations for the conservation and use of wheat genetic resources (including that of wild relatives), to provide an updated and holistic conservation strategy to the community.

The EWG-Germplasm is hosting a call for experts to further develop. To share your ideas and help influence its future, please get in touch.

The Wheat Initiative is coordinating international wheat research and was established by the G20 Agriculture Ministers in 2011. It was founded to assure future food security, which is at risk due to climate change and a rapidly growing world population. There are currently 11 Expert Working Groups in the Wheat Initiative focusing on global wheat research.

#### EWG-Germplasm Co-Chairs:

- Dr. Benjamin Kilian Global Crop Diversity Trust | GERMANY
- Dr. Shivali Sharma Global Crop Diversity Trust | INDIA
- Dr. Peter Cíváň INRAE French National Institute for Agricultural Research | FRANCE
- Prof. Dr. Hakan Özkan Çukurova University, Faculty of Agriculture, Department of Field Crops | TURKEY

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