



## **The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security Farmer Advisory Council Terms of Reference**

### **About the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security**

The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, a program of SeedChange, is committed to building a movement for resilient seed systems across Canada.

#### **Our Mission:**

To create and support seed systems in Canada that promote agroecology and food sovereignty, and are resilient in the face of climate change.

#### **Our Philosophy:**

- We focus on agroecological seed and farming systems. There is a growing consensus on the way forward to grow food and seed sustainably: agroecology. Farmers who practice agroecology require seeds that will perform well in their farming systems. Our work focuses on filling this critically underserved need.
- We embrace the leadership of farmers. As stewards of our food systems, farmers are highly impacted by seed diversity loss. Our work trusts their expertise and experience to lead the way.
- We work in partnership: We work with mission-aligned non-profits, grassroots organizations, research institutions, and funding partners to solve problems collaboratively.
- We advocate for food and seed sovereignty: We believe farmers have the right to access, grow, share, sell, trade, and enjoy the food and seed that sustains their livelihoods, and their communities, in ways that restore the ecological health of the planet.

#### **Our Goals:**

- Increase the quality, quantity, and diversity of regionally-grown, ecological seed
- Preserve, improve, and breed new seed diversity
- Advocate for policies that support resilient, farmer-led seed systems in Canada
- Build a regionally-driven, partnership-oriented, national movement to advance seed system resilience.

## **About the Farmer Advisory Council**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Farmer Advisory Council is to provide strategic direction to assist the Bauta Initiative in meeting the needs of farming and seed growing communities in different regions of Canada.

### **Timing:**

The Advisory Council will exist for a minimum 2-year period from October 2023 to September 2025. This is a new venture for the Bauta Initiative and would be treated as a pilot for this type of community and governance. Individuals can apply for a 1-year term or a 2-year term.

### **Responsibilities:**

The responsibilities of the Advisory Council members are to:

- Attend, and actively participate in meetings to discuss strategic priorities
- Review project-related documents and other items in advance of meetings

### **Topics of Interest:**

Issues to be discussed might include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic directions for The Bauta Family Initiative (e.g. prioritizing new programs, strategies to increase impact, stewarding relationships with funders, strategies for supporting on-farm/participatory seed research)
- Seed policy statements and positions (e.g. advising on advocacy and raising awareness on intellectual property rights on seed)
- Anti-oppression and decolonization of seed systems (e.g. how to support Indigenous seed restoration, how to better engage underrepresented farmers)

### **Advisory Council Meetings Chair:**

The Program Director for the Bauta Initiative will chair the meetings with support from evaluation partner Good Roots Consulting and other team members as appropriate with note-taking and other roles.

### **Meetings and Attendance:**

Meetings will be held two to three times per year by Zoom on a to-be-determined schedule that balances the needs of the program and the capacity of members. A minimum of one month's notice will be given in advance of meetings. Advisory Council members will need access to the internet or a phone to join. Voluntary feedback may also be requested on a periodic basis by email or telephone.

**Advisory Council Experience and Structure:**

The Advisory Council would be made up of 8 - 10 farmers who have a knowledge and understanding of the Bauta Initiative and have actively participated in programs, and/or are actively engaged in the promotion of resilient seed systems. Ideally, the Advisory Council is composed of members that can collectively bring the following perspectives and experiences:

- Knowledge and understanding of the programs of the Bauta Initiative (e.g. seed grow-out programs, variety trials, participatory plant breeding, etc.)
- Farming, seed saving, commercial seed production, and/or plant breeding experience (field crop and/or vegetable seed) in either rural and/or urban contexts
- Geographic representation from different regions in Canada (BC, Prairies, Ontario, Québec, Atlantic Canada)
- Knowledge of, and/or experience in the following topics:
  - Indigenous seed restoration and Indigenous seed systems
  - Organic pedigreed seed production
  - Canadian seed policy
- Equity-owned identities/perspectives, including Indigenous farmers, Black and/or racialized farmers, young farmers, and immigrant and/or newcomer farmers.

**Selection Process:**

Interested farmers are invited to apply through an open application process. Please complete [this form](#) by September 15, 2023. Selection will be based on the criteria identified above. All applicants will be contacted by the end of September with information about the final selection.

**Compensation:**

Members would receive an annual stipend of \$600 to participate in 2-3 meetings per year and provide ideas and feedback by email or phone on a periodic basis.

**Termination and Replacement:**

Advisory Council members agree to fulfill the Roles and Responsibilities and adhere to the Advisory Council group norms, to be established collaboratively in the first meeting and reviewed annually. Members who are unable to meet these expectations may be excused from the Advisory Council by the Program Director. A vacant position may be filled with a replacement at the discretion of the Program Director.