

Culturally-Informed Community Seed Pledge and Code of Ethics (CICSP/COE)

Definitions and Style Guide Primer

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This primer has been designed for use with CICSP/COE.

Definitions and Style Guide: For terms used in the CICSP/COE.

Communities of Origin is a term commonly used in museum collections and acquisitions and is contextualized for seed use in the CICSP/COE to refer to the people group and/or geographical region where particular seeds originated from or by whom they were traditionally cultivated and stewarded including said groups living descendants (Saggar, 2021).

Culturally and/or Community-meaningful seeds are seeds that come from plants that have retained ancestral, traditional, or cultural relationships with specific communities and places of origin.

Example: Although corn was first adapted by Indigenous community-based plant breeders in Mesoamerica from its wild relative teosinte (U.S. National Science Foundation, 2005), not all modern corn varieties have retained culturally or community-meaningful ties to Indigenous groups while some, like Abenaki Rose, an heirloom Wabanaki variety that together with four other varieties make up the “dietary keystone of the Wabanaki agricultural revival,” (Wiseman, 2014) has maintained its cultural significance within its community of origin.

Minoritized Seed Keepers (growers, farmers, groups, individuals, communities, etc.): To best represent the intended idea of an individual or group facing exclusion, discrimination, or lack of representation based on current or historical systemic factors, the term “minoritized” was selected for use in the CICSP/COE.

*The terms “historically marginalized” and “minoritized” both refer to communities or groups that have faced forms of social, racial, or cultural oppression, discrimination, or power disparity on a systemic level regardless of their group’s numbers. For example,

growers who are Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color (BIPOC) make up a numerical majority of the world's agricultural labor force yet have been minoritized by longstanding injustices in agricultural systems. Rural farmers have not necessarily always been historically marginalized, yet many rural communities now suffer from lack of agricultural investments and widening gaps in technological advances and support. Different governmental agencies and/or programs may use a variety of terms such as "socially disadvantaged" which may inadvertently contribute to deficit-based assumptions. Additionally, some individuals may not feel adequately or accurately represented by the term BIPOC, including those living outside the US who may prefer the term People of the Global Majority or PoGM (Hawthorne, 2023).

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can be conceptualized as a spectrum of experiential knowledge cultivated by those living or working on and in relationship with land over long periods of time (Kimmerer, 2002). This spectrum encompasses Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) developed by individuals such as fishers, hunters, farmers, etc., over their lifetime; shared cultural TEK by a community of individuals over hundreds of years; and Indigenous Local Knowledge (ILK) cultivated by millennia of a place's Native inhabitants.

References

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