



## Kerri Wright Platais

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### Summary

A Mediator at Meridian Institute with more than 20 years of professional experience in international development and policy related work, including: management and oversight of various policy dialogues and programs involving agricultural development and the interface of science and the environment; staffing 15 CEOs of international research institutes on collective initiatives; responsible for the development, design and execution of international meetings and training programs; providing communication tools, media outreach; and fund raising and strategic planning for international programs and endowments.

Substantive expertise includes: agriculture, food security and biotechnology; climate change, agroforestry, ecosystems, biodiversity; monitoring and evaluation; technology transfer with small holder organic farming collectives; international training. Her focus in international development has included work with the World Bank, USAID, the Harvard Institute of International Development, The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research and the Global Crop Diversity Trust.

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### Meridian Experience

**Meridian Institute**, Washington, District of Columbia, 2009 – Present

Meridian Institute designs and facilitates collaborative processes that help diverse parties identify critical issues, build relationships and trust, construct innovative solutions, and implement durable decisions. The collaborative processes address challenges at the local, state, national, and international levels, and involve leaders from government agencies, industry, nongovernmental organizations, and international institutions. Meridian also assists organizations in conducting strategy development and planning.

#### Mediator

Manage and facilitate policy dialogues, negotiations, and strategy development projects involving teams of facilitators. Conduct convening assessments, design processes, plan and facilitate meetings, help participants develop consensus documents, and conduct implementation activities. Recent project highlights include:

- Responsible for the day-to-day coordination of activities for the Government of Norway REDD-Options Assessment Report. Meridian managed, convened and facilitated an intensive three-month development process that included in-person and on-line consultations resulting in a report and executive summary written by a team of international REDD experts.
- Member of the Innovations for Agricultural Value Chains in Africa: Applying Emerging Science and Innovation to Enhance Cassava, Dairy, and Maize Value Chains funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Meridian team member for the Commission on Climate and Tropical Forests, a bi-partisan group of leaders from business, government, advocacy, global development, science and national security convened to provide recommendations on how best to address tropical deforestation through U.S. climate change policies.

Please see selected project highlights.

## Previous Experience

### **The Global Crop Diversity Trust,** 2007–2008

#### *Senior Program Officer*

Coordinated and planned fund raising and public awareness activities including seminars, speaking engagements, lectures and interviews for the Executive Director during and leading up to the opening of the Global Seed Vault in Svalbard, Norway. Developed and designed new communication tools for international release.

### **Alliance Office of the CGIAR Centers,** 2002–2007

#### *Senior Program Officer*

Executive Secretary and later Senior Program Officer for the collective work of the 15 Director Generals of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Facilitated the design and development of the collective work of the Directors General which included the formation of the Alliance Office to implement and coordinate collective and strategic efforts. Designed and managed two international meetings per year for the leadership group.

### **The World Bank,** Washington, D.C. 1999-2002

#### *Technical Writer*

Synthesized transcripts and produced minutes from Committee meetings of the Executive Directors. Focused primarily on the Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE), and periodically covered meetings of the Budget, Audit and Personnel Committees. Edited additional documents produced from the Development Committee, and Summaries of Discussion of full Board meetings

### **Harvard Institute for International Development,** El Salvador 1997-1998

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist*

Worked on the Education Reform in El Salvador Project. Responsible for research, design and writing of a document entitled, “*Monitoreo & Evaluación: Un Programa para el Taller Sobre Gestión de Proyectos,*” Taught a short, three day course in Spanish.

### **USAID Office of Economic Growth,** El Salvador 1996

#### *Development Advisor*

Compiled five years of project documents for the USAID Mission and interviewed over 30 people within the donor community and the private banking sector of El Salvador, regarding past and planned activities in the area of microfinance. Investigated on-going plans of the Government of El Salvador (GOES) to provide assistance in the area of microfinance through various institutions, as well as the role of the local and international NGO community.

### **USAID Mission,** El Salvador 1996

#### *Editor/ Writer*

Worked with the Strategic Development Office, USAID Mission/El Salvador to design, edit and format a six-year strategic plan (1997-2000) following El Salvador’s civil war. This involved extensive drafting as well as editing in the Mission’s key areas of work: National Reconstruction Program, Economic Growth, Democratic Initiatives, Health and the Environment.

### **World Bank, Secretariat of the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research**

1989-1994

#### *Research Analyst/ Information Officer*

Member of the Science Advisors team, which provided technical expertise in the evaluation and monitoring of science programs in the CGIAR. Specialized in Biotechnology; Intellectual Property Rights; Plant Genetic Resources; Sustainable Development, and Monitoring and Evaluation of Training Programs and Gender Research. Served as a member of the Secretariat's public awareness and resource mobilization team. co-authored policy papers and participated in international scientific dialogues. Held responsibility for NGO liaison activities, including the organization of international round tables. Organized scientific workshops and seminars and edited subsequent proceedings. Participated in External Program and Management Reviews. Managed and edited *CGIAR Highlights*.

### **International Plant Biotechnology Network (IPBNet) Tissue Culture for Crops Project,**

Fort Collins, Colorado

1986-1989

#### *Network Coordinator*

Coordinated the first ever USAID-funded information and training network in biotechnology for developing country scientists. Designed and implemented short-term training course evaluation and follow-up for the project. Organized two international conferences held in Bangkok, Thailand (1987) and in Nairobi, Kenya (1989). Negotiated and assisted in the organization of two regional tissue culture training courses held in Costa Rica (1988) and Morocco (1989).

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## **Education**

### **Colorado State University,**

Fort Collins, Colorado

**M.S.**, Agronomy

1989

**B.A.**, Social Science

1985

## Selected Project Highlights

**Government of Norway REDD-Options Assessment Report Coordination and Strategic Support leading to the Copenhagen COP15 meetings:** The Government of Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative, part of the Ministry of the Environment, commissioned Meridian Institute to convene a team of international REDD experts to assess policy options for integrating a REDD mechanism in a potential Copenhagen agreement in December 2009 as part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) Options Analysis Report (REDD-OAR) was released in March 2009 and addresses financial incentives; procedures for setting reference levels; methodologies for monitoring, reporting and verification; and processes to promote the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities. The report, an executive summary, and translations of the executive summary in Spanish and French, are available. An Indonesian language translation will be available in early April 2009. In addition, a special web site ([www.REDD-OAR.org](http://www.REDD-OAR.org)) was established for access during the course of the UN negotiations through Copenhagen. Current activities focus on public and delegation briefings at upcoming UNFCCC negotiating sessions. Meridian managed, convened and facilitated the intensive three month report development process as well as the in-person and electronic, on-line consultations that involved governments, civil society, indigenous peoples' representatives and other key stakeholders. The emphasis of this project was to develop a time-sensitive, expert assessment informed by consultations rather than a multi-stakeholder, consensus building process with advice from expert resource people. For more information and related documents please go to <http://www.REDD-OAR.org>.

**Innovations for Agricultural Value Chains in Africa:** Meridian Institute has received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to bring together leading scientist and innovators with key players in the maize, cassava, and dairy value chains in Africa. The goal is to identify out-of-the-box, innovative post-harvest management and processing technologies to add significant value for smallholder farmers by reducing inefficiencies in these value chains. To accomplish this goal Meridian will work with contracted local partners to identify key bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the value chains, facilitate interactions among scientists, African farmers, entrepreneurs, companies, other institutions, and agricultural experts to generate and prioritize ideas for innovative applications of science and technology to reduce value chain inefficiencies, and develop business plans and strategies for turning the most promising technology ideas into real-world solutions.

The project will look for opportunities to develop technologies that (1) complement and support other efforts to improve value chains in Africa (including other technology-focused initiatives, but – importantly – projects that are focused on policy, legal, institutional, market, and socio-economic issues) and (2) are technically, socially, and economically feasible. Because of the checkered history of technology-based interventions for rural development, Meridian will document lessons learned from past successes and failures to introduce new or enhanced technologies and work closely with local partners to generate creative new ideas that would add value for smallholder farmers, not cost, and do so in a manner responding to local preferences and priorities.