



Fund

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WORKING DOCUMENT

*Fund Office analysis and suggestions on
W1/W2 extension proposals*

*Submitted by:
Fund Office*

Fund Office analysis and suggestions on W1/W2 extension proposals

The FO has reviewed all extension proposals and budget requests taking into consideration ISPC and Consortium Science Team assessments, absorptive capacity of the CRP based on prior spending trajectory, dependency on W1/W2 funding, and budget growth proposed in the extensions (see attached tables and annexes).

The total budget request from W1/2 for the 2015-2016 extension period is \$801m, made up of \$386m in 2015 and \$415m in 2016.

The Fund Council should note that current FO projections for W1/W2 income available for CRPs in 2015 is \$325m. CRPs are currently projecting a combined W1/W2 cash underspend of \$38m in 2013. Putting aside \$18m W1/W2 resources for the Genebanks CRP in 2015, the W1/W2 funding in 2015 available for CRP extensions is estimated to be \$345m.

The FO presents for FC consideration the following suggestions:

- **Group A:** Eleven extension proposals received support from ISPC and CO Science Team. The total budget request for these 11 CRP extensions is reasonable with an average budget increase of 3.28%. The total 2015-2016 W1/W2 budget request for these CRP extensions could remain unchanged at \$301.87m.
- **Group B:** Three CRPs gave rise to some serious concerns expressed in ISPC and/or CO Science Team reviews. In addition these budget requests are relatively high compared to Group A. The FC could consider the following W1/W2 budget amendments to the proposals:
 - AAS, Aquatic Agricultural Systems: 25% reduction
 - Humidtropics: 40% reduction
 - WLE, Water, Land and Ecosystems: 15% reduction
- **Group C:** The only CRP extension proposal in this category is Dryland Systems. Very serious concerns on the proposal were expressed in both ISPC and CO Science Team assessments. The establishment of an independent Task Force to work in tandem with the newly appointed CRP Director and in parallel with the DS CRP Scientific Advisory Board is proposed by the Consortium. This will identify and prioritize mission critical activities that need to be resourced within the existing program portfolio and to help develop a coherent and strategically compelling case for Dryland Systems research that could form a core component of a new portfolio of CRPs starting in 2017.

Taking into consideration these points, the FC could consider a reduction of 50% of the original W1/2 budget request to support primarily the CRP governance, management and strategic systems approach capability as well as funding existing essential research areas that are performing well. This would result in an overall reduction of 18.5% in the total extension budget request due to the CRP's relatively low dependence on W1/W2 funding.

Budget Outcome

If the suggested modifications to proposed extension budgets were put in place the total W1/W2 requirement for extensions would be \$357.62m in 2015 which would be \$12.62m (3.6%) over projected availability of W1/2 resources, however given the current trend of CRP cash underspending this is considered a reasonable margin.

This is in contrast to the 2015 W1/W2 projected deficit of \$41.12 (11.9%) if all extension proposal budgets were to be approved as submitted.

CRP Extension: Summary of Evaluations

Group A: Good proposals, convergence of ISPC & Consortium views, budget request reasonable and justifiable

Total W1/W2 budget/Year (average 2015-16) = \$301.87m (+3.28% on 2014)

CRP	Comments	Size of CRP (extension) ¹	Proposal category ²	Dependency on W1/W2 ³	Budget trend (2015-16) vs. (2014) ⁴
A4NH Agriculture for Nutrition and Health	Some initial concerns from ISPC now resolved. Expansion of the CRP is rapid. Need to focus on the proof-of-concept in key areas. ISPC expressed concerns about the work on 'nutrition-sensitive' landscapes.	Large	Good	24%	+5%
CCAFS Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security	Convergence ISPC & Consortium views.	Medium	Excellent	65%	+8%
DC Dryland Cereals	Some serious concerns from ISPC but now resolved.	Small	Good	35%	-16%
FTA Forests, Trees and Agroforestry	Had to be resubmitted. Convergence ISPC & Consortium views on the revised proposal.	Large	Average	35%	+1%
GL Grain Legumes	Convergence ISPC & Consortium views.	Medium	Average	31%	-5%

¹ Based on total budget in 2015+2016. Large: >\$180m, Medium: [\$110m-\$160m], Small: <\$80m

² Based on ISPC comments complemented by CO views. 4 categories: Excellent, Good, Average, Poor

³ Calculated based on (Sum W1/2 budget 2015 & 2016)/(Sum total CRP budget 2015 & 2016)

GRISP Rice	Convergence ISPC & Consortium views.	Large	Good	39%	+14%
L&F Livestock and Fish	Convergence of ISPC & Consortium views.	Small	Good	57%	-9%
MAIZE	Convergence of ISPC & Consortium views. Budget request increase due to more focus on delivery.	Large	Good	20%	+26%
PIM Policies, Institutions and Markets	Convergence of ISPC & Consortium views. Budget lower but still some concerns expressed about overall cost of this CRP (ISPC).	Large	Good	28%	-8%
RTB Roots, Tubers and Bananas	Convergence ISPC & Consortium views.	Medium	Average	44%	-5%
WHEAT	Convergence of ISPC & Consortium views. The expansion in budget seems warranted and in line with the projected growth areas of the CRP (e.g. focus on bioinformatics /database, precision phenotyping activities and better management/governance)	Medium	Excellent	30%	+30%

Group B: Acceptable proposals but divergence of opinions between ISPC & Consortium and/or concerns over the budget

Total W1/W2 budget/Year (average 2015-16) = \$77.75m (+33.85% on 2014)

CRP	Comments	Size of CRP (extension)	Proposal quality	Dependency on W1/W2	Budget trend (2015-16) vs. (2014)
AAS Aquatic Agricultural Systems	ISPC had serious concerns about the approach being adopted by AAS, and the lack of scientific innovation. Proposal had to be resubmitted. The ISPC continues to have concerns about this CRP. Still a development experiment rather than a true research program. AAS needs to consolidate research at existing sites instead of expanding its number of hubs. The increase in the 2015-16 request is a concern (+28%).	Small	Average	53%	+28%
Humidtropics	ISPC considered that this CRP had made significant progress and cautioned not to expand the number of sites. This should be noted and has budget implications.	Small	Average	54%	+68%
WLE Water, Land and Ecosystems	ISPC considered that WLE had not responded to ISPC revisions, which had been given as conditions for approval of the original proposal. Had to be resubmitted. Now the proposal is refocused on National and Regional scale. Some divergence of opinions between ISPC & Consortium on hub expansion. The increase in the 2015-16 budget request is a concern (+22%).	Medium	Average	51%	+22%

Group C: Poor proposal

CRP	Comments	Size of CRP (extension)	Proposal category	Dependency on W1/W2	Budget trend (2015-16) vs. (2014)
DS Dryland Systems	Serious concerns from both ISPC & Consortium on the proposal. Proposal wasn't resubmitted but establishment of a Task Force is recommended by the Consortium.	Medium	Poor	37%	+2%

Modified W1/W2 extension proposals for Fund Council consideration:

Group	CRP	Extension Request	Suggested modifications	Variance with original W1/W2 budget request	Variance with original total budget request	2014	2015	2016
						W1/2	W1/2 modified	W1/2 modified
A	A4NH, Agriculture for Nutrition and Health	59,000	59,000	0%	0.0%	28,000	29,300	29,700
A	CCAFS, Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security	99,200	99,200	0%	0.0%	47,348	48,400	50,800
A	DC, Dryland Cereals	16,514	16,514	0%	0.0%	9,827	7,140	9,374
A	FTA, Forests, Trees and Agroforestry	68,838	68,838	0%	0.0%	34,100	32,780	36,058
A	GL, Grain Legumes	35,471	35,471	0%	0.0%	18,722	16,150	19,321
A	GRiSP, Rice	86,360	86,360	0%	0.0%	37,759	41,440	44,920
A	L&F, Livestock and Fish	34,755	34,755	0%	0.0%	19,149	16,550	18,205
A	MAIZE	41,048	41,048	0%	0.0%	16,318	20,220	20,828
A	PIM, Policies, Institutions and Markets	54,500	54,500	0%	0.0%	29,700	27,000	27,500
A	RTB, Roots, Tubers and Bananas	68,456	68,456	0%	0.0%	36,100	33,155	35,301
A	WHEAT	39,570	39,570	0%	0.0%	15,246	19,144	20,426
B	AAS, Aquatic Agricultural Systems	42,100	31,575	-25%	-13.2%	16,399	15,075	16,500
B	Humidtropics	42,000	25,200	-40%	-21.5%	12,489	12,000	13,200
B	WLE, Water, Land and Ecosystems	71,400	60,690	-15%	-7.7%	29,200	28,900	31,790
C	DS, Dryland Systems	42,000	21,000	-50%	-18.5%	20,722	10,373	10,628
		801,212	742,177	-7%	-2.8%	371,079	357,627	384,551

Annex I: Summary information on CRP Dryland Systems:

- **Poor proposal.**
- **Budget trend = +2%**
- **Needs serious governance and programme strategy review.**
- **Strongly advise to scale down the CRP (e.g. focus on governance, ToC, impact pathways and priority settings) or even to suspend it.**

- **The ISPC believes that there is a *critical* need to address the following substantive issues.**
 - The CRP needs to include a plausible Theory of Change.
 - The design principles for flagship programs in this CRP need to be laid out, as FPs should be addressing the research needs to solve the major constraints to agricultural production and resource stabilization in the dryland areas. The adoption of regional “flagship programs” seems cosmetic and encompasses quite different collections of projects being done at the sites. Strategic choices have to be made - other bilateral and regional support work, which does not fit within the Theory of Change, should be followed outside this CRP if necessary.
 - The CRP needs to draw strategic lessons across sub-regions, that contribute to the SLOs and clear impact pathways need to be identified. This is expected to require crosscutting activities and enhanced synthetic capabilities.
 - The ISPC is concerned with scientific critical mass and that insufficient emphasis is given to key research areas (examples given in section 1.2 below). If expertise is limiting, the ISPC believes that this needs to be addressed through the CRP’s partnership strategy.

For the CRP Dryland Systems, the **CO does recommend approving an extension but with constrained conditions.** Given the poor quality of this and other submissions (annual report, program of work and budget), and a poor performance record over the history of the CRP, the CO does not have confidence that asking the lead center (ICARDA) and the current CRP team to improve and resubmit their proposal will solve the issues. For that reason the CO recommends fairly drastic actions to improve the CR at short notice by calling in external assistance from world-leading institutions and establishing a Task Force, funded from the CRPs W1-2 budget. The CO proposes a reduced budget for the Dryland System CRP for the extension period, given its current underperformance. Therefore, having to fund a substantial budget for the Task Force out of a reduced CRP budget is not likely to be well received by ICARDA, and will require the host centre and partners to focus on mission critical activities.

Annex II: Detailed analysis of CRP extension proposals (in alphabetical order)

A4NH (Group A)

- Good revised proposal addressing all major concerns from ISPC/CO.
- Dependency on W1/W2= 24%
- Budget trend= +5%
- Increase in budget seems legitimate.

ISPC Comments:

- A4NH is already spread too widely geographically...in 50 different locations and needs to prioritize. There is also no mention of what has come to an end.
 - *“As explained in the narrative response, A4NH research prioritization is guided by what regions and countries bear the highest burdens of undernutrition and diseases associated with agriculture. Frequently, these burdens coexist in the same countries in Africa and South Asia. The next step is to decide what agriculture can do to improve nutrition and health in these areas, guided by what we are learning from our ToCs and impact pathways. Thus, research prioritization is a process in which our initial portfolio is adapted based on both supply and demand factors, taking into consideration any comparative advantage of focusing on international and regional, rather than local public goods. “*
- There is a proposed large expansion in the 2015-2016 budgets to support new activities, mainly in the FP – VCN (an additional USD 14.4 million over the regular budget of USD 14 million). This is an enormous increase, which requires a fuller explanation and justification; moreover as noted before, the ISPC would not recommend moving ahead with the research cluster in nutrition-sensitive landscapes (USD 3 million of the requested USD 14.4 million in the expansion budget). The budget also indicates that the planned work on nutrition-sensitive landscapes has a regular budget of USD 0.6 million for 2015- 2016 (the CRP states that this amount is either confirmed or the program is confident of getting restricted funding linked to maintaining a small growth in W1/W2 funding) – it is not obvious what this means and how/when this allocation was made and approved.
 - Response from CRP: *“One of the issues raised by ISPC was the current (2012-2014) and planned (2015-2016) growth of A4NH. This is a challenge that we are managing. There is very strong demand from funders, governments and development implementers for research knowledge and evidence from A4NH research. From the funders there is a very laudable demand for evidence on the implementation and impact of interventions, particularly at scale.” ...” The funding for this research is largely from restricted grants. Both FPs get approximately 80% of their*

funding from restricted grants, which are relatively large, and well justified in their funding proposals, including detailed results frameworks and ToCs.”

- The distribution of the budget among the Flagship Projects indicates that FP Biofortification receives well over 50% of the budget. This work builds on earlier work and is having impact. A significant portion of this funding is bilateral/W3 funding. The budget has been growing steadily and a further increase of approximately USD 12 million is requested for 2015. **Unless this has already been committed, the ISPC would recommend consolidation before further expansion, at least until the ToCs have been finalized and the new partnerships proposed can be assessed for relevance to the ToCs.**
 - Response from CRP: *“While research is growing, it is starting at a relatively slow pace given the huge investment in agricultural value chains and the many nutrition claims made by their proponents. We believe it is important that we have enough funding and critical mass, internally and through partners, to do credible research. “*
- Resubmission was requested due to serious ISPC concerns.

Consortium Comments:

- Expansion of A4NH’s two FPs, Nutrition Sensitive Value Chains (including a new cluster on Nutrition Sensitive Landscapes) and Agriculture-Associated Diseases, are very interesting developments.
- A4NH is well positioned to play an important role in assessing the future demand as well as the nutritional needs of the world’s population. Therefore research to assess the right mix of future crop/livestock needs to meet nutrition requirements and future consumer demand will be helpful. A4NH could work with other CRPs, including crop improvement CRPs, to determine the nutritional value of CGIAR commodity improvement programs and assess future evolution of local demand of these commodities.

CRP Response & ISPC review:

- A4NH submitted a 21 page response to the Consortium Office on 25th August and, in addition, the Chair and Executive Director of the ISPC learnt more about A4NH during a visit to Washington in September.
- Overall the ISPC acknowledges that this program is effectively responding to donor demand and seriously addressing the assumptions and barriers associated with impact pathways for key activities. The ISPC is satisfied that A4NH has listened to the concerns expressed and has provided sufficient justification for the Extension Proposal to be approved.

CRP Response & Consortium review:

- The response matrix addresses each of these points (Impact pathways, Gender, Comparative advantage & overall A4NH research prioritization) in a detailed

manner and in our view the extension proposal is acceptable. However, there are two issues that will need to be considered in more detail for the new portfolio of CRPs given the extensive interest in food and nutrition security. These revolve around comparative advantage and mission creep. The response matrix addresses these points in a robust manner but further analysis and review is required which go beyond the current extension phase. The A4NH CRP will focus on the following areas during the extension phase: Within the Value Chains for Enhanced Nutrition a focus on food systems including the double burden of under nutrition and obesity together with nutrition sensitive landscapes and sustainable diets. For Biofortification and Integrated Programs and Policies an expansion to impact at scale through partnerships

AAS

(Group C)

- **The AAS is still a development experiment rather than a true research program. It needs to be further tested.**
- **As for Humidtropics, AAS was requested by ISPC to reduce substantially the number of hubs. This reduction in number of hubs was partly implemented in the revised proposal but the total budget remained somehow the same as the original proposal submitted in April. Therefore it seems that while AAS addressed some of the concerns of ISPC, the limited reduction in scope of the project didn't result in a reduction in the budget.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 53%**
- **Budget trend= +28%**

ISPC Comments:

- The ISPC has serious concerns
 - Much more attention is needed on the issue of how the CRP adds value to research, particularly the pipeline of biophysical technologies being developed in the commodity CRPs.
 - Plans for collecting panel data from the hubs, as well as a counterfactual design that collects data from paired comparison sites where the CRP is not working, should be implemented with some urgency. Without such data there is no way to address the “big idea” of action research in development as a research question that will generate international public goods.
 - Plans for expanding the number of hubs should remain on hold until such a time that a more credible case can be made that the investments in the existing sites have delivered results.
- AAS looks very much as a development program rather than a true research program.

- The ISPC believed that the CRP should outline how the global science flagship helps generate international public goods from the place-based flagships. In the absence of such information, and given that it represents the largest share of the budget of the flagship projects, the CRP did not look like a good investment in its current form.
- The ISPC had little confidence that an expansion in the number of hubs will be carried out in a way that ensures that these local activities contribute to the SLOs or generate IPGs. AAS may already be over-extended.
- The requested budget for 2015-2016 is substantially more than the original CRP budget.

Consortium Comments:

- The submitted proposal fails to convey how the CRP generates and uses high quality scientific results and technological and policy and institutional improvements to support innovation by smallholder communities in the regions where it works.. While the proposal states that research activities in the flagships (hubs) will be consolidated during the extension phase, it does not explain what these research activities are.
- AAS's extension proposal was ranked among the bottom of the 15 submissions. We request AAS to address specific comments presented below and resubmit the proposal to the CO by August 30, 2014.

CRP Response & ISPC review:

- The ISPC continues to consider the AAS CRP as an experiment in development. The development experiment needs to be tested in a proof of concept approach. From this perspective, the costs of a proof of concept testing of the approach appear to be high and increasing.
- The ISPC thus recommends that the FC approves support for the AAS CRP for the extension period. This should **allow for further testing of the CRP's approach and metrics within its current five hubs only**. The report of the independent evaluation of AAS should be used to help determine the nature of the future call for a research approach to aquatic agricultural systems and its geographic scope.
- Overall, the proposal has made an ambitious attempt to place development at the center of the research agenda. Indeed, one could almost see this not as a CGIAR Research Program but as a CGIAR Development Program. That is not a criticism, but a comment that AAS may need to be viewed and judged by slightly different criteria from other CRPs. This CRP is arguably an experiment in itself, and the outcome of the experiment may have much to teach the rest of the CGIAR. There are also some very specific and important questions being asked of aquatic agricultural livelihood systems on the way which should be highlighted for answer in the shorter term and which will add value to the conduct of the CRP.

CRP Response & Consortium review:

- There is one comment from ISPC with which they disagree: that they should not expand to further sites. The reasons presented in their point-by-point response to ISPC are cogent and I support their decision. All CRPs need to have a minimum of diversity of conditions encompassed across their sites in order to make more rapid progress, in addition to the points made by AAS about the need to work alongside with other CRPs at some of their sites.
 - The resubmitted proposal now presents research questions, hypotheses supporting their theory of change and they have clarified the scientific content of most of what they do, including that they do work on increasing the productivity of aquatic systems, in addition to their own interpretation of work on innovation systems.
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CCAFS

(Group A)

- **Good proposal with robust governance.**
- **Some issues on the Theory of Change and IDOs but nothing substantially controversial.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 65%**
- **Budget trend= +8%**

ISPC Comments:

- ISPC notes that the subject matter and goals of this program truly represent a "grand challenge" for food security and poverty reduction in the 21st century; hence CRP7 fills an important role in the CGIAR. The extension proposal is presented clearly, and the covering letter is particularly helpful in drawing attention to some of the main issues. CCAFS has built strong partnerships with non-CGIAR institutions like ESSP (now Future Earth), and continues to emphasize strategic partnerships with other CRPs and global, regional, and national institutions in relation to its theory of change (ToC).
- Overall, CRP7 appears to be attempting to move away from "legacy" projects and realigning its CGIAR partnerships to its strategic focus. While this reconfiguration likely will become clearer over the next two years, this is indicative of CRP7's willingness to adapt and learn from experience and is highly appreciated.
- The theories of change fail to document evidence in support of the change mechanisms and crucially, ignore the formulation of testable hypotheses regarding those mechanisms (ISPC, December 2012, p. 7). There is no statement of assumptions regarding the ToC – what are the conditions that need to be met for the program to deliver? While CRP7 has done well to identify which FP is responsible for each IDO (Figure 2), identifying change mechanisms to explain

the relationships between outputs and IDOs and SLOs, and framing these as hypotheses for testing is required. These program design concepts are rapidly evolving and only partly formed within CGIAR practice, so CRP7 leaders probably deserve some latitude at this time.

- CCAFS has identified indicators and quantitative targets for 2019 and 2025 but, in the absence of clear statement of assumptions, some of these appear to be a substantial leap.
- ISPC notes that CRP7 continues to be outstanding in its commitment to work through a comprehensive and relevant range of strategic partnerships for key functions (research, capacity building, knowledge management, action on practices, policy and institutional change, and management and governance), even as ISPC recognizes that assessing the quality of these partnerships at this stage is difficult.
- While CRP7 has described major changes in context (CSA Alliance, role of information age in addressing poor extension services for farmers etc.), there is not sufficient discussion of what specific new components have been introduced (besides how their CSA strategy will be further embedded in global bodies) and how these relate to these contextual changes that CRP7 considers important, and what components are coming to an end.
- ISPC commented on the budget but considered that the limited information provided in this proposal makes it difficult to assess these changes, and more importantly, whether the allocation between FPs is appropriate.

Consortium Comments:

- The Consortium Science Team considered this proposal as excellent, ranked as the best of the 15 extension proposals. It recommends its submission for approval as it stands, with no amendment required. We commend the CCAFS team on the very high quality of its work. CCAFS deals with an issue critical to the future of mankind, and has been doing so in a very effective manner, as demonstrated by its Annual Reports 2011, 2012 and 2013 and by its annual programmes of work and budget 2013, 2014.
- Specific Points CCAFS needs to address
 - We ask that CCAFS and FTA provide a description of the climate change activities they have agreed to undertake jointly and those they have agreed to undertake separately (in no more than 1 page).
 - We also recommend that CCAFS and Livestock and Fish discuss how they can collaborate on decreasing the climate change footprint of livestock (if this is not going on already) in order to show their joint activities.

Dryland Cereals

(Group A)

- **Proposal is sound and response from CRP answered the main concerns from ISPC/Consortium.**
- **Minor adjustments required in terms of impact pathways and priority settings.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 35%**
- **Budget trend= -16%**

ISPC Comments:

- Dryland Cereals appears to have made progress in the implementation phase of this CRP. Progress is reported in research on sorghum and pearl millet. Research outputs and outcomes are better formulated, gender-relevant research is starting to permeate into planning and implementation, partnerships have been further strengthened, and capacity-building exercises have increased...
- The major concern with the extension proposal is the lack of evidence that the detailed scientific program has been informed by a coherent theory of change.
- The ISPC has serious concerns about the following five key areas which are highlighted below and elaborated on in the detailed commentary:
 1. There remains a need to define, target and focus carefully; in particular in relation to defining the specific target geographic domains x target farmer group x product type (food, feed, other use) – based on need and impact potential. This is required so that the CRP can focus its investments and efforts optimally.
 2. To underpin the priority setting exercise, serious attention must be given to several issues raised earlier by the ISPC, namely: dryland cereal demand analysis and adoption constraint analysis. Only cursory attention was given to estimating demand in the Extension Proposal, and no prioritization of the adoption constraints for new technologies and knowledge, including gender issues that affect desired production and consumption characteristics, were evident.
 3. A major deficiency with the ToC is lack of clarity as to how research outputs will result in outcomes.
 4. Collaborations with CGIAR Centers and other CRPs are not described in sufficient operational detail to assess prospects for success. In particular, there ought to be much greater evidence of integration between Dryland Cereals and other CRPs, particularly with Dryland Systems (and at an early stage in the variety development process), but also with Grain Legumes, Livestock & Fish and PIM CRPs.
 5. The scope of the 'value chain analysis' should be defined carefully. Value chain analysis brings in issues of trade, input supply, etc. for which this CRP may not have the expertise.

- The budget for 2016 is proposed at 20% above the average program budget of 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, but is only slightly higher than the budget for 2014. Since 2013, the CRP continues to attract about 50-60% of its funding from bilateral sources. The budget for 2015-2016 appears to be coherent with the original proposed and based on past years appears to be reasonable.

CRP Response & ISPC review:

- The ISPC is satisfied that DC is responding positively to the concerns raised by the ISPC and CO and taking adequate steps to address those concerns and therefore recommends its extension for the proposed period.
- The ISPC believes the CRP has provided a very thoughtful and constructive response to the main issues highlighted in the ISPC and CO commentaries, including elaborating on how they have and how they propose to address these issues over the next two years. These are by no means trivial issues, and so it is essential that CRP leadership maintains a careful watch to ensure that a more systematic and coherent effort is applied across each of these strategically important areas - rather than individual piece meal efforts through random single studies. Such a serious and coherent effort would facilitate the process of setting research priorities and developing collaborative strategies for the CRP that provide the best possible chance of meeting well specified and rationalized IDO targets. In summary, the ISPC is pleased with the response from the CRP team and looks forward to the next steps of the CRP in the areas of enhanced focus, priority setting and targeting.

Final Consortium Comments:

- The Extension Proposal is acceptable. However, there are two issues that will need to be considered in more detail before starting the extension period:
 1. Finalize the priority setting not only in terms of regions x crop x product type but also for mapping technology and investment efforts;
 2. Completing the DC impact pathway, not only consider the private sector involvement (SFSA and DuPont Pioneer) but also by designing complementary activities with NARs and local/regional SMEs as part of FP4 (“Seed systems and inputs services) and FP5 (“Storage, end-use orientation, market access, policies”).

Dryland Systems

(Group C)

- **Poor proposal**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 37%**
- **Budget trend= +2%**
- **Needs serious governance and programme strategy review.**

- **Strongly advise to scale down the CRP (e.g. focus on governance, ToC, impact pathways and priority settings).**

ISPC Comments:

- **The ISPC believes that there is a *critical* need to address the following substantive issues.**
 - The CRP needs to include a plausible Theory of Change.
 - The design principles for flagship programs in this CRP need to be laid out, as FPs should be addressing the research needs to solve the major constraints to agricultural production and resource stabilization in the dryland areas. The adoption of regional “flagship programs” seems cosmetic and encompasses quite different collections of projects being done at the sites. Strategic choices have to be made - other bilateral and regional support work, which does not fit within the Theory of Change, should be followed outside this CRP if necessary.
 - The CRP needs to draw strategic lessons across sub-regions, that contribute to the SLOs and clear impact pathways need to be identified. This is expected to require crosscutting activities and enhanced synthetic capabilities.
 - The ISPC is concerned with scientific critical mass and that insufficient emphasis is given to key research areas (examples given in section 1.2 below). If expertise is limiting, the ISPC believes that this needs to be addressed through the CRP’s partnership strategy.
- CRP 1.1 Dryland Systems (DS) was approved for an Inception Phase in late 2011 on the agreement that the proponents would revise the proposal during this phase based on suggestions by the ISPC and FC. A revised proposal was submitted in January 2013. DS is led by ICARDA in partnership with CGIAR Centers Bioversity, CIAT, CIP, ICRISAT, ILRI, IWMI, World Fish and World Agroforestry. It also works closely with the SSA-CP. After reviewing the final revised proposal, the ISPC recommended approval in February 2013 but that more work was needed during Phase 1 for further development of research hypotheses that focus specifically on dryland systems; improved prioritization of activities and more information on under-pinning science, a theory of how social change will result from the research proposed; an enhanced case for impact by quantifying outputs and outcomes and defining IDOs; improved partnership strategy (retention of existing partners and identifying new partners); better articulation of the process of flow of knowledge and technologies from the commodity CRPs to DS; and finally, activities on biodiversity needed a more secure under- pinning and more effort was needed on addressing nutrition.
- The DS proposal needs to define and explain the scientific complementarity and practical interaction with other CRPs. Show how DS and other CRPs connect over research problems and questions addressed and together martial a critical mass of science capacity to tackle this research

- No apparent links with other CRPs such as: Dryland Cereals, Grain Legumes, WHEAT, and RTB etc.
- The ISPC asks the fundamental question of whether regional Flagships make sense in research terms.
- Without a specific cross-cutting activity or even a FP for cross-program learning mechanisms, contributions to IDOs will be agricultural livelihood system- and region-specific, and it will be extremely difficult to aggregate outcomes and contributions to IDOs at CRP level and to identify IPGs. This needs urgent attention in the Extension Phase. Both Humidtropics and AAS have a crosscutting FP that could be used as a model by DS.
- Most of the current activities are in the discovery and proof-of-concept stage.
- The rationale for the large W1/W2 budget devoted to the current set of activities should be reassessed against a strategic systems view of the drylands and the key outcomes that are to be sought.
- DS needs to address FP crosscutting gender issues, integration and learning during the extension phase and this is likely to have budget implications.
- The rationale for the large W1/W2 budget devoted to the current set of activities should be reassessed against a strategic systems view of the drylands and the key outcomes that are to be sought.
- As emphasized several time above, DS needs to address FP crosscutting gender issues, integration and learning during the extension phase and this is likely to have budget implications.

Consortium Comments:

- Submission of poor quality documents has been a recurring problem with DS and is evident not only in the poor quality of the submitted extension proposal, which failed to convey a coherent and effective program, but also in the poor quality of other documents, such as the recent POWB. These factors reflect significant structural and leadership issues that need to be addressed.
- The proposal has significant drawbacks, making it by far the worst of the 15 proposals reviewed by the Consortium Science Team. The CRP's organizational structure does not convey strategic thinking and the proposal fails to convey core vision, key priorities, concrete objectives and targeted deliverables. Consequently, the proposal comes across as a large set of atomized research activities spread over far too many regions (5 regions) and agricultural systems (7 systems) with no overall scientific or research coherence.
- Specific points that DS needs to address:
 - Demonstrate the scientific critical mass and intellectual leadership required to drive a world-leading dryland systems research program. We recognize that the appointment of a new Director starts to address the issue of intellectual leadership, but scientific critical mass and capacity remain serious concerns.

- State explicitly the ‘burning’ scientific questions that the research is designed to address and how this CRP will address them in a structured and organized way, with the appropriate use of selected partners.
 - Focus the above questions on significant problems, clearly prioritized and show how addressing these questions will lead to major improvements in the significant problems faced by dryland agricultural systems. This implies having a strategic and well thought out theory of change, based on credible assumptions and hypotheses. To support the reorganization of the program with new FPs, we recommend the design of individual sub-ToCs for each of the proposed FPs with their own specific sets of assumptions. This approach, recommended by ISPC (2012 Report on ToC & IP), has indeed been convincingly adopted by other CRPs in their Extension Proposal for 2015-16.
 - Explicitly state what the added value of DS at CRP portfolio level actually consists of, given all the breeding work undertaken by other CRPs, the system level work of AAS and Humidtropics and the work of non-CGIAR research and development actors in the drylands.
 - Define and explain the scientific complementarity and practical interaction with other CRPs. Show how DS and other CRPs connect over research problems and questions addressed and together marshal a critical mass of science capacity to tackle this research. Also, as a systems research CRP, we expect DS to have particularly strong links and partnerships with all the relevant crop improvement CRPs (Dryland Cereals, WHEAT, Grain Legumes, RTB, Livestock and Fish) in addition to the natural resources management CRPs and PIM. Provide a Rationale, (key problems to be tackled, questions needing research, theory of change, expected outcomes and impacts) for the establishment of fewer but very significant, in terms of research and development challenges, regional Flagships and the recommended global flagship (to include gender). Specify the expected results from on-going systems-based research and identify what systems-based research needs to be developed in future.
- As described earlier, and supported by the commentary of the ISPC, this extension proposal is extremely disappointing and provides little confidence that this CRP has evolved sufficiently since its inception to warrant further support in its current form. This, together with poorly prepared Annual Reports and POWB, suggests that a re-submission of the extension proposal will not address the fundamental and underpinning problems. Under these circumstances, we recommend that an independent task force be established to work in tandem with the newly appointed Director and in parallel with the Scientific Advisory Board to: in the short-term, identify and prioritise mission critical activities that need to be resourced within the existing portfolio and, second, to develop a coherent and strategically compelling case for Dryland Systems research that could form a core component of a new portfolio of CRPs starting in 2017.

FTA (Group A)

- **Dependency on W1/W2= 35%**
- **Budget trend= +1%**
- **The revised proposal is much more solid and convincing. Minor issues still not full addressed but CRP will cover these ‘must have’ in the 2015-16 period.**

ISPC Comments:

- Overall CRP6 has made good progress in the past two years. ISPC recognizes the difficulties of crafting a coherent research proposal from the diverse legacy activities that provided its foundations but commends FTA on the progress made in this direction.
- The ISPC has, however, identified the following 6 areas where improvements should be made:
 - CRP6 should be more than just a framework to contain (compelling but) independent projects.
 - CRP6 misses an opportunity to explain how FPs and sentinel sites have evolved and are connected, and fails to present clear explicit rationale for the role of sentinel sites in enhancing the outcomes and impact of the full range of FPs.
 - ISPC recognizes the high transaction costs of the very large numbers of partners and would encourage greater attention to the precise functions and value added of specific partnerships.
 - ISPC recognizes the transactions costs incurred by complex partnership arrangements, but still considers that CRP6 could do more to develop linkages with other CRPs.
 - The current portfolio of projects apparently contains activities that others already are doing. CRP6 risks moving too far into an advocacy space already occupied by existing global players (WWF, IUCN, IIED, even FAO)
- There is a need to better understand how Sentinel Landscapes and any other FP sites will be used to address strategic research questions and advance the CRP’s contribution to IDOs and SLOs.
- The requested budget for 2015 and 2016 represent an overall growth rate of about 9% over the 2014 budget (year-on-year growth rate of ~13% between 2011 and 2013). There is a funding gap of 29% (decrease from 32% of the 2011-2013 budget) for 2015-2016 to be raised through proposals. 25% of the overall budget will be allocated to partnerships, 10% for capacity building, and 20% for gender research. FTA, in 2011, stated that non-CGIAR partners are not likely to be allocated funding (W1&2) if it jeopardizes the viability of participating Centers.

Consortium Comments:

- FTA is the only CRP that works on all aspects of the value and benefits of trees and forests for agricultural landscapes and agricultural sustainability (environmental, social and economic). This is an absolutely essential dimension of a forward looking portfolio of research programmes addressing ‘grand’ development challenges in agriculture. Unfortunately, this proposal is not convincing, mainly because it is at times too generic and at other times too focused on processes rather than the substance of FTA’s work.
- CRP6 proposal suggests that it intends to strengthen Sentinel Landscapes (and ISPC has recognized the importance of this component) but it is unclear from this proposal if resource allocation has changed (if necessary) and reflects this increased prioritization.
- Unfortunately, this proposal is not convincing, mainly because it is at times too generic and at other times too focused on processes rather than the substance of FTA’s work. As it stands, this extension proposal is not ready for submission for approval to the Consortium Board and the Fund Council and first requires significant amendments.
- An explanation of how the different flagships interact and work together through the crosscutting themes is needed.
- It is very surprising that no mention at all of CCAFS is made in the proposal (Flagship 4)
- On what basis and criteria did FTA select its current set of flagship projects? Some rationale for arriving at these flagship projects is needed because it is not easy to see how the 5 flagships constitute a well integrated research for development agenda on forests and trees.
- The description of the impact pathway for technology advance is also not convincing. It is very generic and does not explain how and through which mechanisms FTA’s work on technological innovations can be scaled up effectively. Likewise for the description of how FTA embeds research in uptake streams. It is unconvincing because it is totally generic.

Revised proposal & ISPC review:

- The ISPC views the management response as signaling a strong commitment and good faith effort by the CRP6 management to understand, clarify, and take onboard ISPC’s concerns. The ISPC is satisfied that CRP6 has provided sufficient clarification and justification for the Extension Proposal to be approved.
- The ISPC views the management response as signaling a strong commitment and good faith effort by the CRP6 management to understand, clarify, and take onboard ISPC’s concerns. The ISPC is satisfied that CRP6 has provided sufficient clarification and justification for the Extension Proposal to be approved.
- Overall, the CRP6 management response and revised proposal successfully addresses or outlines systems in place (or being put in place) to address the most salient issues in the June 2014 extension proposal. The ISPC looks forward to the

outcomes of such processes in 2015-16, and reviewing how such progress reflects in/influences the second round of proposal development.

Revised proposal & Consortium review:

- Consortium: The resubmission is now very clear about what FTA contributes to the SLO's and about the key roles FTA plays within the portfolio of 15 CRPs, including how it collaborates with other CRPs. It is also convincing about what the CRP will focus on during the 2-year extension and what it will produce during this period.
- Over the 2 year extension, FTA will focus on:
 - Systematic priority-setting and re-focusing of the FTA portfolio of projects across the flagships.
 - Developing additional breeding strategies for tree germplasm and improving the functional diversity of agroforestry practices, including regarding soil health, working at sites co-located with Dryland Systems and HumidTropics.
 - Policy work concerning sustainable timber and non-timber products for multiple stakeholders in the Congo Basin, the Amazon and Mesoamerica, the dry African woodlands. In addition, FTA will work in global centers of tree biodiversity in Central Asia (fruits, nut trees) and Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire and Melanesia (cacao, coconut).
 - Improving landscape management to better achieve SDGs, through land use change analyses and policy work
 - Providing new evidence on forests, deforestation, trees in landscapes and their roles in climate change adaptation and mitigation to inform and guide new global climate agreements. This includes concluding a comparative analysis of REDD+ implementation at 22 sites.
 - Design of innovative business models for large scale investors (e.g., timber, oil palm, beef, cocoa) to invest in more socially responsible and sustainable practices that no longer create deforestation
 - New external partnerships with a range of global actors in forestry, climate change, academia so that the database of FTA are well interacted within strategic global long-term monitoring and surveillance networks working on land use change, deforestation, climate change.

Grain Legumes

(Group A)

- **Solid proposal.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 31%**
- **Budget trend= -5%**

ISPC Comments:

- **The ISPC identified the following points as areas where improvements could be made.** These are highlighted below and elaborated on in the detailed commentary:
 1. Specify a vision of success with respect to expected impact, viz-a-viz the number of targeted smallholder farmers and the farming systems in each country and region. Map target domains clearly for each of the grain legumes and the hypothesized impact pathways outlined. References to data and methods on which targets and projections are made should be made available at the time of submission of new proposals in response to the second call.
 2. Undertake a rigorous demand analyses (to substantiate the claims made about increasing consumption), synthesize studies on adoption constraint analyses, and complete the priority setting exercise - by crop and region - based on need and impact potential.
 3. The theory of change (ToC) for each target output should be completed as a matter of priority, and to include in each impact pathway the assumptions underlying progress along the pathway consistent with the assumptions underlying the overarching ToC.
 4. Proper targeting and definition of the breeding strategy requires a more nuanced definition that takes into account both agro-ecological and socioeconomic conditions, including the market preferred traits, demand patterns and the role of private and public sector in legume R & D.
 5. Pursue a more holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to improving productivity and exploiting the potential for grain legumes in small-holder farming systems, both for their income potential and for improving the diets of the poor. Productivity enhancement, targeting, gender, market development and impact-at- scale on the farmers' fields all need further improvement.
 6. Clearly show linkages to other CRPs through a table or a matrix. Attribution and transparency are critical where different CRPs contribute to different activities in the same value chain. The CRP should also consider explicitly defining a 'partnership strategy'.
- The Budget is not altogether clear. It appears that the budget for 2015-2016 is based on the 'average' budget from 2012-2014 and seems to be coherent with the budget proposed in the original proposal. The 2015 budget is roughly similar to 2014, but the program requests a 20% increase (USD7 million) in 2016. The latter requires some justification, especially in the light of the statement "**Budget partitioning between participating Centers is largely unchanged**". **This is disappointing, and would seem to suggest little serious movement toward re-strategizing.** Furthermore, the total increase in the 2016 budget is evenly allocated across all FPs and CCs at a 15% increase, again, not indicative of a strategic choice. The major share (about 37%) of the FP budget is with FP 2 and 3 (varietal trait discovery and deployment), which is similar to the Dryland Cereals budget allocated to varietal improvement.

Consortium Comments:

- Grain Legumes (GL) submitted an extension proposal conceptually clear and well presented. The CRP is in a crucial transition phase regarding the structure and organization of the program moving: from an old structure with 5 Strategic Components (SCs) addressing 8 product lines (PLs) classified by crop/trait, into a new organization with 5 Flagship Projects (FPs) and 3 Cross-Cutting Areas (CCs). The research activities clustered in these 5 FPs+3CCs are clearly identified and defined, with the corresponding budget to be allocated in 2015 and 2016
- GL's extension proposal was considered as satisfactory and ranked in the middle range of the 15 CRP submissions. The extension proposal does not need to be amended prior to submission to the Consortium Board for approval. However, we do require you to respond to the specific comments given below, together with the ISPC report (attached). In addition you are required to complete a performance matrix as per the attached template. We require these by August 25, 2014.

Final Consortium Comments:

- Grain Legumes have provided a comprehensive response to both the CO and ISPC commentary amounting to more than 20 pages. Six key points were raised by ISPC:
 - a. Specify a vision of success with respect.
 - b. Undertake a rigorous demand analyses priority setting exercise - by crop and region - based on need and impact potential.
 - c. The theory of change (ToC) for each target output should be completed as a matter of priority, and to include in each impact pathway the assumptions underlying progress along the pathway consistent with the assumptions underlying the overarching ToC.
 - d. Proper targeting and definition of the breeding strategy requires a more nuanced definition that takes into account both agro-ecological and socioeconomic conditions, including the market preferred traits, demand patterns and the role of private and public sector in legume R & D.
 - e. Pursue a more holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to improving productivity and exploiting the potential for grain legumes in small-holder farming systems, both for their income potential and for improving the diets of the poor.
 - f. Clearly show linkages to other CRPs through a table or a matrix. Attribution and transparency are critical where different CRPs contribute to different activities in the same value chain. The CRP should also consider explicitly defining a 'partnership strategy'.

All have been addressed by the CRP Director.

GRiSP**(Group A)**

- **Good proposal.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 39%**
- **Budget trend= +14%**
- **Proposed increases in budget are legitimate and will contribute to increased efficiency of the CRP in delivering the expected outcomes.**

ISPC Comments:

- More clarity of the power dynamics within and between partnerships is needed, i.e. mapping out who is doing what in the scaling out activities as well as more details in the allocation of the GRiSP budget to NARES partners for these activities.
- The one feature that is missing in the ToC is the need to convey a strong impression that all of the research themes need to work in concert to produce the desired impacts. However there is a need to further refine the CRP IDO targets and indicators.
- The ISPC would recommend that GRiSP communicate with linked CRPs on measurement of indicators common to more than one program; the ongoing ISPC strategic study on Metrics may also prove useful in this exercise.
- The ISPC would encourage GRiSP to explore the “added value” from more engagement and coordination with other relevant CRPs such as AAS and WLE.
- The main change is a new FP, called “Sustainable and efficient rice value chains,” which includes and links the development and delivery of sustainable practices along the whole value chain from production to postproduction. This FP fills an important gap and seems to be a good step forward.
- The most significant change/new element of GRiSP in 2016 will be its transition to a more outcome- driven and results-based management. The CRP will implement a new results framework as an outcome of its “fast-track project” on developing a results-based M&E system. Other new components include more effort in gender R&D activities (particularly linked to the FP on Value Chains), mainstreaming of nutritional traits through QTL analysis into all breeding lines, and the use of a new Genetic Diversity Platform for genotype–phenotype prediction. The new components should contribute to improving GRiSP’s overall expected outcomes.
- The budget proposed for the extension is for 2016 (the 2015 budget was approved as part of Phase I). The budget for W1 + W2 is 10% more than the 2015 budget which is in keeping with GRiSP’s requests since 2013. However, the W1 + W2 investment builds on the fact that the CRP continues to attract about 65% of funding from bilateral sources. The budget for 2016 appears to be coherent with the original proposed and based on past years appears to be feasible.

Consortium Comments:

- This is a very good Extension Proposal; it is coherent and clearly structured.
 - Specific points that GRISP needs to address:
 - Update of the Theory of Change.
 - Minor adjustments in Flagship projects
 - Updates the Gender section
 - Etc.
-

Humidtropics: (Group B)

- **Good proposal.**
- **Humidtropics should first consolidate and build synergies/integration with other CRPs.**
- **Expansion to other sites should be considered post 2016.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 54%**
- **Budget trend= +68%**
- **Some concerns about the expansion and the proposed high budget increase. The Humidtropics budget could be reduced substantially if the decision is to be more conservative in terms of expansion to other sites.**

ISPC Comments:

- The ISPC recognizes that the systems approach (particularly at the scale being presented in the three systems programs of which Humidtropics is one) is new to the CGIAR and urges that the careful analysis and development of the program is maintained, while identifying three areas worthy of particular attention.
- The ISPC finds that the revised CRP Humidtropics has developed well, putting in place a new Theory of change and structure. It has yet to explain why this is an added-value proposition over previous work.
- A key for the extension phase (and confidence building for a further phase) would therefore be to highlight lessons learnt from the new research configuration and identify gaps in prior research and thus how to enhance systems outcomes.
- The ISPC supports the intent of Humidtropics to consolidate its work in the existing priority Tier 1 locations during the Extension period.
- ISPC stated that the original budget proposed for 2015-2016 was approx. USD 32 million per year, which was coherent with the 2014 budget of USD 29 million. (However the latest figures from the Consortium shows that the request is now for USD 42 million).
- Need to demonstrate the value-added from a collaborative system. This implies ensuring an optimal collaboration with other CRPs (e.g. A4NH, FTA etc.).

- Need to first consolidate on the existing FP sites and build synergies with other CRPs (e.g. colocation). In the future an expansion to other sites could be considered at the condition that Humidtropics demonstrates its complementarity and synergies with the other CRPs (e.g. commodities, CCAFS, FTA etc.).
 - Humidtropics needs to better explain the basis of selecting its targeted geographic FPs.
 - Need to highlight lessons learnt from the new research configuration and identify gaps in prior research and thus how to enhance systems outcomes.
 - Need to develop a solid set of targets and indicators as well as a robust M&E.
- Expansion to other sites should be considered post-2016 (=post extension), once the CRP has demonstrated its true integration and complementarity with the full CRP portfolio.

Consortium Comments:

- Overall, Humidtropics has submitted a convincing proposal. While it has some weaknesses, it reflects a genuine attempt to address systems research head on, and incorporates careful planning. Humidtropics has a well-developed strategic plan and an action plan to implement this strategy; the plan appears achievable. Among other activities, the work planned for the extension phase builds on growing efforts for strengthening integrated systems research within partner organizations, and establishing the structures and teams for its execution. This CRP promises to produce breakthrough methodologies for systems research, which are not yet in place anywhere else.
- Humidtropics’s extension proposal was considered as satisfactory and mid-ranked among the 15 CRP submissions.
- Specific points that Humidtropics needs to address:
 - Humidtropics needs to explain the basis of selecting its targeted geographic FPs.
 - Related to the comment above, there is a need to explain how the CRP plans to extrapolate its work beyond these geographic FPs.
 - It would help if the CRP can explain how the outcomes from the phased work plan presented in Section 6 are related to its IDO targets.
 - While the CRP should be commended for its on-going efforts on partnerships, including partnership with other CRPs, the CO Science Team would like to underscore the importance of partnerships to systems research. In particular, Humidtropics is encouraged to move its partnerships with other CRPs to the same level as its current partnership with RTB. Similarly, the CO Science Team encourages the CRP to continue to be very thoughtful about its external partnerships that enhance its science capabilities and scale-up its success. Finally, Humidtropics should move forward its initial engagements and discussions with other Systems Research CRPs to concrete partnership efforts when appropriate.

- The CRP is in the process of fully establishing its capabilities on gender and the gender component of its proposal is mostly satisfactory. Gender is one of its identified IDOs, indicating the strong commitment that the CRP has for this topic. However, the CRP needs to add a component to address the proposal template requirement on 'gender in the workplace'.

Livestock & Fish (L&F) (Group A)

- **Excellent proposal, well-articulated etc.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 57%**
- **Budget trend= -9%**
- **It would be appropriate giving a wider mandate to L&F to lead cross-CRP coordination.**

ISPC Comments:

- ISPC stressed that the scope of strategic research on livestock to be taken forward by the CGIAR is a priority issues that should be addressed during the extension phase.
- In the Financial Plan 2014-15, the L&F total budget for 2015 is US\$29,3m with 16,5m provided through W1/2 and 5,5m through W1, the lowest W1/W1+2 ratio over all the CRPs (33%). For 2016, L&F requests a 10% budget increment - in alignment with all the other CRPs-, which is strongly supported by the excellent quality of the proposal.
 - The L&F CRP responded: *“We have undertaken an exercise to better project the CRP funding levels. The summary is provided in Annex 5. Overall program funding is expected to increase only 1% from 2015 (\$30.2 m) to 2016 (\$30.6 m), with funding from activities winding down being reallocated to cover the projected decline in bilateral funding, enabling the planned sequence of activities to continue. We request that you update the submitted proposal with this corrected version of the budget: the W1/2 budgets and deliverables remain unchanged; it just reflects a more realistic projection of the bilateral funding that will be available.”*
- The ISPC identified the following five areas where improvements could be made.
 - The added value from putting livestock and fish research together in a program is not being capitalized upon.
 - The work on improvement of the discrete value chains is now surrounded by major “flagship projects” on health, genetics and feeds. These may serve this program but also a wider strategic program on livestock.
 - There is a need to keep focus: the attraction of the original proposal was that it argued for focus on a few selected livestock value chains. However, the discovery component promises to grow markedly; work in Ghana, Malaysia and India is all cited. This, and the range of livestock

health topics (and large budgetary differences between them), also raise questions about prioritization, the relative size of a program and the scope of supporting work which should be inside or outside the value chain focus.

- The value chain approach is being used by other CRPs and the ISPC does not see currently how this CRP will assist, or learn from, other programs in this regard. A conscious community of practice on value chains should be developed across programs.
- The LF program is attempting to introduce a gender dimension into its work, but there is little evidence that these concepts are affecting prioritization of research effort e.g. on livestock feeding practices.
- As the structure of LF has changed, it appears to have successfully attracted substantial new funds from bilateral and W3 sources, and comparison with the original proposal is difficult. Year on year the budget requested increases by about 10% which is in line with other CRPs. The budget breakdown by contribution to IDOs shows that 50% of the budget will contribute to increased productivity while 25% will contribute to the goal of increased employment and income.
- It is noticeable that the bilateral budget is large for animal health (particularly on diagnostics and vaccines) which signals strong donor interest and raises the question as to whether there are enough resources going into this area, but relatively smaller for the livestock forage/feed and systems FPs. This illustrates one of the benefits of the windows approach in that W1&2 funding can be used to create a more cohesive package of work which the ISPC hopes will continue. There is no direct indication as to whether the value chain priority setting process has influenced budget allocation but the budget for the value chain transformation and scaling FP will increase from 2015-2016 which shows a good commitment to uptake of outputs, outcomes and impact. Fish value chain work has a budget of USD 6.16million (year 2015), 15% of total budget, made up of USD 1.66 million windows funding and USD 4.5 million from bilateral, largely committed to breeding, value chain interventions and value chain transformation and scaling. No rationalisation is provided as to whether these proportions are the most appropriate means of carrying out strategic work.

Consortium Comments:

- This is a very good Extension Proposal, conceptually coherent and clear.
- The budget is well-allocated by FPs and CoAs for L&F and then separately for the four Centers collaborating in this program: ILRI, CIAT, ICARDA and Worldfish, which is highly appreciated.
- Good proposal, well balanced. L&F's extension proposal was considered as highly satisfactory by the CO and ranked in the top 5 of the 15 CRP submissions.
- More work is needed on the value chain.

- The ISPC notes that currently LF has no mandate or funding to pursue cross-CRP coordination in strategic areas.
- In the FinPlan 2014-15, the L&F total budget for 2015 is US\$29,3m with 16,5m provided through W1/2 and 5,5m through W1, the lowest W1/W1+2 ratio over all the CRPs (33%). For 2016, L&F requests a 10% budget increment - in alignment with all the other CRPs-, which is strongly supported by the excellent quality of the proposal.

Revised proposal & Consortium review:

- The response from L&F to the written documents provided by ISPC and CO is extensive, well- structured and comprehensive. The response matrix addresses each of the points mentioned first by CO and then completed by ISPC in a detailed manner and key elements of these responses are summarized in a 12-pager document - plus 5 annex.

MAIZE (Group A)

- **Solid proposal. The appreciated focus towards delivery has a budget implication.**
- **Additional work on Gender urgently required.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 20%**
- **Budget trend= +26%**

ISPC Comments:

- The major challenge of CRP MAIZE is to create a strategic, international approach of public- private partnership for maize research to sustainably strengthen resource- poor women and men maize farmers and poor maize consumers.
- The ISPC identified the following points as areas where improvements could be made.
 - More attention should be given to the development of a coherent program-level product delivery strategy better aligned to the SLOs.
 - There is a need to complete the definition of impacts.
 - MAIZE should clarify its CRPs linkages and the activities involved.
 - The quality and strength of involvement with regional partners should be further improved for building more effective partnerships with key regional players.
- The ISPC recommended approval of the MAIZE CRP proposal (April 2011), without “must haves”...
- Several comments and recommendations made by the ISPC on the original proposal are still relevant to the extension phase. The CRP has responded efficiently to the emergency of Maize Lethal Necrosis disease, but apart from

- that there seems to be no major evolution in the R4D strategy and priority setting.
- There is overall good alignment of the new CRP Flagship Projects (FPs) with the initial “Strategic Initiatives” of the Maize CRP and consolidation of program deliverables into IDOs, which are now at a much higher level, compared to the original research outcomes.
 - The research team should provide more information in the next annual report on what the Innovation Platforms are doing and how they fit into the impact pathway.
 - Need to clarify what “empowerment” really means for a selection of key stakeholders and whether there may be trade-offs or unintended consequences resulting from shifts in power dynamics that the program should anticipate and deal with.
 - The MAIZE team should coordinate with other CRPs on measurement of indicators common to more than one program; the recent ISPC strategic study on Metrics may also be useful for this exercise.
 - MAIZE seeks an increase of USD 3.247 M over the USD 16.97 M allocated for 2015. The CRP already receives USD 50.27 M in bilateral support. Bilateral funding therefore funds a large proportion of the CRP strategic work plan, with FP for stress resilient and nutritious maize receiving USD 15.07 M. The relatively large increase in budget is to support new activities, mainly for delivery.
 - Current investments are well aligned with the original MAIZE proposal hence the Extension Proposal budget has coherence with the original budget. Additional funding is sought for sub- activities of existing CoAs. Justification for these additional funds is given in the Extension Proposal. The budget and increased funding seems reasonable providing the planned activities will produce the deliverables.
 - The budget seems to be distributed fairly amongst the five FPs. As for other commodity projects, the FPs producing improved varieties (FP2 and 3) account for more than half the budget. This is an inevitable consequence of this being the core strength/advantage of a commodity CRP. It is noted that 15% of the budget is for gender activities and 19% is for partnerships.

Consortium Comments:

- MAIZE submitted a very good Extension Proposal, conceptually coherent and clear.
- Some relatively minor improvements required on ToC & IDOs, FPs, Gender, Partnerships.
- Most of the increased budget will support well-identified and described activities. Two additional priorities are planned to drive forward an informatics/genomics data back office in collaboration with Cornell University and secondly to set up and implement an informatics breeding management

system (as the BMS developed by IBP or equivalent These activities need to be precisely described in the work-plan and budgeted accordingly for 2015-16.

CRP response & Consortium review:

- The Extension Proposal is acceptable. However, the Gender Research Strategy is still a main issue that needs to be revised before starting the extension period. Indeed, the first proposal was only approved by the CO for its first year of implementation, and MAIZE was requested to submit a revised version in May 2014 which they did. Unfortunately, this second version still lacks of clear research tractable questions and hypothesis and the CRP recently committed to submitting an improved revised version before the end of 2014.

PIM (Group A or B)

- **Good proposal**
- **High cost of coordination.**
- **Some unexplored strategic areas.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 28%**
- **Budget trend= -8%**

ISPC Comments:

- The ISPC identified the following 4 points as areas in need of improvement.
 - More strategic effort is required for establishing priorities and achieving focus, including (i) assessing the relative importance (even qualitatively) of policies vs. markets vs. institutions in impeding agricultural growth; (ii) thinking carefully about the comparative advantages of the CGIAR and which things belong inside PIM; and (iii) selection of partners and defining optimal linkages across and within FPs.
 - There could be greater movement towards ending some activities (legacy projects) and further consolidation.
 - There is still a need to articulate better the theories of change (ToC) at the program and FP levels, and to map impact pathways to the IDOs, describing assumptions underlying the ToC and the assumptions and risks within each impact pathway.
 - The division of labour between how PIM works with CGIAR Centers and links with other CRPs should be made clearer, defining PIM's linkages with other CRPs, as distinct from its partnerships with other CGIAR Centers within PIM, through impact pathway schematics.
- The budgets proposed for both 2015 and 2016 are coherent with the original proposed budget both for W1/W2 and W3/Bilateral funding (and pp 14-15 give more details). That said, the budgets presented here are very high: it is hard to

look at PIM without noting the price tag. This raises issues of "value for money" and underscores the importance of having a clearer picture about PIM's comparative advantage to assess whether there are other lower-cost providers of the same research, e.g., can university-based researchers or other entities deliver the same kind of information?

- The rationale behind the selection of the clusters of activities within the flagships is not immediately obvious. For instance, why is PIM working on water and land policies but not on conservation policies that do have an impact on agricultural landscapes? No flagship seems to deal with the whole science-policy interface to investigate systematically the different ways and pathways for policy research to actually have an influence on policy-making. PIM is the only CRP that can cogently work on this science-policy-making interface and should be contributing to knowledge globally on this very important issue. Why is PIM not working on this interface?
- The manner in which PIM collaborates with other CRPs should be clarified, as explained in the ISPC's comments. A number of other CRPs undertake policy research, and since PIM works on methodological developments in various subject areas that are of relevance to a large number of CRPs, this clarification will also help determine how PIM positions itself within the CGIAR research portfolio, including for the second call.
- PIM needs to clarify what is included in its management and coordination budget, which is about 20% of its total W1/W2 funding request.

Consortium Comments:

- PIM has submitted a very good, clear, coherent and convincing extension proposal. The Consortium Science team ranks it in the top 3 among the 15 proposals received.
- The manner in which PIM collaborates with other CRPs should be clarified, as explained in the ISPC's comments. A number of other CRPs undertake policy research, and since PIM works on methodological developments in various subject areas that are of relevance to a large number of CRPs, this clarification will also help determine how PIM positions itself within the CGIAR research portfolio, including for the second call.
- PIM needs to clarify what is included in its management and coordination budget, which is about 20% of its total W1/W2 funding request.

CRP Response and Consortium Comments:

- PIM provided a thoughtful and well-documented response to both the CO and ISPC. PIM has totally adequately addressed all the comments of the CO and ISPC

RTB**(Group A)**

- **Solid proposal.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 44%**
- **Budget trend= -5%**

ISPC Comments:

- The recommendation for approval by the ISPC of the November 2011 version was on the understanding that the CRP would address some of the concerns expressed in the original review that had not been satisfactorily addressed, in particular:
 - Specifying which activities are continuing, what is new, and how a new agenda will be based on a prioritization process during the initial phase of the CRP
 - Greater detail regarding how the four CGIAR centers will set priorities and negotiate the process of deciding where to focus
 - Spelling out more clearly the areas that would be targeted through research investments for innovations and scientific breakthroughs
 - Specifying clear geographic priorities

Significant progress has been made to addressing all four of these concerns. The impression given by the extension proposal is of a strong, well-managed CRP that is taking initiative for the benefit of the CGIAR as a whole.

- RTB has taken a careful approach to generating flagship projects, which captures the CGIAR comparative advantage, and the ISPC believes that there are lessons to be learned from the way RTB has gone about trying to bring clarity and focus to the CRP.
- Overall, the planned budget is consistent with the original with a 10% increase in 2016. The budget by themes continues through the extension period as the flagships are being slowly and carefully developed.

Consortium Comments:

- This is a good proposal that reflects much careful planning and priority-setting, serious progress in its partnerships and its delivery of significant outputs and outcomes, as well as internal discussions on the need for RTB to restructure its activities along outcome orientated lines.
- RTB's extension proposal was considered as satisfactory and ranked in the middle range of the 15 CRP submissions.
- The Science Team strongly recommends that restructuring into flagships takes place during the first year of extension as the process now runs the risk of losing momentum and being too drawn out to be effective. We are concerned that the scientific synergies that were to result from bringing closer together the

- breeding work on the 6 crops (as explained in RTB's original proposal) have not yet been fully realised because the current thematic organisation has not facilitated such integrated work.
- As presented in the proposal, it appears that RTB plans to have significantly more delivery than discovery flagship projects. This may indicate an imbalance between short-term delivery and longer-term discovery research which would not be sustainable in any CRP. In finalising its flagship projects, RTB should thus pay close attention to maintaining a balance of activities between discovery and delivery.
 - Among the three areas mentioned in the proposal for new discovery research, the proposed work on in situ conservation of RTB agro biodiversity is much needed. In addition to the work mentioned on land races and crop wild relatives, work at the agro ecosystem level on in situ management of RTB agro biodiversity should be included for RTB's results to better contribute to system resilience (its last IDO).

Final Consortium Comments:

- The RTB responses adequately cover the commentary from the CO and ISPC. During the extension period RTB will focus on:
 - Transition from output-based to results-based management (RBM).
 - Increase integration of gender and implement strategic gender research to enhance gender equity.
 - Expand linkages with regional and sub-regional organizations.
 - Build broader alliances of partnerships.
 - Maintain longer-term pipeline of discovery research.
 - Improve the RTB business case to achieve a tangible set of outcomes more cost effectively.

WHEAT

(Group A)

- **Excellent proposal, well-articulated etc.**
- **The expansion in budget seems legitimate and in line with the expected growth of the CRP (e.g. focus on bioinformatics /database, precision phenotyping activities and better management/governance)**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 30%**
- **Budget trend= +30%**

ISPC Comments:

- There is still work to be done in completing the definition of impacts. ISPC encourages the research team to pursue their efforts on identification of CRP IDO targets and indicators.
- WHEAT needs to speed up gender mainstreaming in the CRP research work plan.

- There is a need to document how the CRP is managing its partnership and major regional collaboration initiatives. It is also recommended that future description of research partnership include an analysis of motivations, needs, capabilities and working relationships.
- The WHEAT Extension Proposal describes new areas of work – major new projects - and investment under the 5 FPs, including an independently led International Wheat Yield Partnership, a Global Phenotyping Network, a Heat & Drought Consortium, a WHEAT business case and upstream R4D on sustainable intensification. These new initiatives are expected to make significant contributions to productivity, food security and income impact potential. Some bilateral funding has been secured and WHEAT will seek additional CGIAR Fund investment (see further comment under Budget). There is a lack of clarity about which R4D components have come to an end.
- The top priority for WHEAT is to continue to ensure such high quality partner involvement. Gap analysis and competitive funds should be used to identify partners with proven records in delivery. It is also recommended that future discussion on research partners is expanded to include an analysis of motivations, needs, capabilities and working relationships.
- WHEAT requests an extra USD 3.9 million mainly for an expansion of ongoing activities. Of these the bioinformatics /database and precision phenotyping activities **seem to be essential and present a good case for extra funding**. If not feasible, then it would be reasonable to see how the considerable effort in monitoring performance shapes work plans and focus of the CRP.
- With regard to the perceived under-funding due to failure to realize synergies with MAIZE, additional resources are requested by WHEAT to strengthen interactions with the independent oversight committee and partners, pursue gender mainstreaming, implement a stronger M&E framework (all in a quite different context and geographies than those to MAIZE) and enable knowledge management, open-access and communication among WHEAT partners and with other stakeholders. WHEAT hence applies for an oversight and management budget from W1&W2 which is better aligned with current system wide expectations.
- There is no major change from 2014 in the allocation of funds among the FPs. The majority of the extra budget is for FP 3 and specifically for bioinformatics and phenotyping. These activities are the heartland of the WHEAT genetic strategy. There is a compelling case to consider the budget increase for these activities, or if not practical, ask WHEAT to prioritize other activities. Already a large portion of the bilateral budget is used to support FP 2 and FP 3 activities. Reasonable budget allocations to FP 4 and 5 (Sustainable intensification of wheat-based cropping systems and Human and institutional capacities for seed systems and scaling-out) demonstrate WHEAT’s commitment to delivery and impact.

- For WHEAT the US\$37,2m total 2015 budget is underfunded, when compared with MAIZE (US\$64,6m) or GRiSPs (US\$112,9m). From this total budget, US\$15,2m (40% of the total) is funded through W1/2 and, consequently, WHEAT proposes an increased W1/2 budget of US\$3,8m (+20%) and US\$3,6m (+18%) for 2015 and 2016, respectively. The work-plan precisely indicates where the additional funding will be allocated based on well-targeted priorities and strategic objectives.

Consortium Comments:

- WHEAT’s extension proposal was considered as excellent and ranked in the top 3 of the 15 CRP submissions. The extension proposal does not need to be amended prior to submission to the Consortium Board for approval. However, we do require you to respond to the specific comments given below, together with the ISPC report (attached). In addition you are required to complete a performance matrix as per the attached template. We require these by August 25, 2014.
- The next priority in terms of additional budget request is for management. Wheat is planning to double its budget from US\$2,1 to US\$4,1 to increase its capacity on (i) Oversight & management, (ii) Knowledge management, open-access and communication, (iii) M&E and (iv) Gender mainstreaming in South Asia. Wheat should consider presenting the new organizational managerial structure to be put in place and proposing a scaled implementation program, with different scenarios depending on the additional annual budget allocated for this activity.
- This is an excellent Extension Proposal, conceptually clear, coherent and articulating an innovative structure with 5 closely inter-connected Flagship Projects (FPs), each with inter-linked Clusters of Activities (CoAs). This creates better complementarity and synergies between activities when compared with its previous 10 Strategic Initiatives.
- The program also includes innovative thinking translated into a new set of research activities built around a modern genetic pipeline for breeding purposes (FP2 and FP3). Seed delivery and scaling-out (FP5) are complemented by sustainable intensification of wheat cropping systems (FP4). The internal coherence is supported by the horizontal guidance of FP1, focused on maximizing value for money (foresight, targeting, IP analysis, gender-responsive strategic research).
- For WHEAT the US\$37,2m total 2015 budget is underfunded, when compared with MAIZE (US\$64,6m) or GRiSPs (US\$112,9m). From this total budget, US\$15,2m (40% of the total) is funded through W1/2 and, consequently, WHEAT proposes an increased W1/2 budget of US\$3,8m (+20%) and US\$3,6m (+18%) for 2015 and 2016, respectively. The work-plan precisely indicates where the additional funding will be allocated based on well-targeted priorities and strategic objectives.

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CRP Response and Consortium Review:

- In our view, the Extension Proposal is acceptable. The clarity and quality of this proposal is aligned with other WHEAT reporting documents (POWB 2014, Annual Report 2013). In addition, the new WHEAT activities for the coming 2 years are identified with their requested budget and mapped to the different FPs with a contingency plan. The WHEAT additional funding is planned to be allocated based on targeted priorities and strategic objectives.

WLE (Group B)

- **The proposal was revised and is considered as satisfactory for both ISPC & CO. The structure, at least, is more convincing than the previous submission.**
- **The Costs of programme management and coordination, at US\$9.7m in the original proposal have been reduced to US\$3.6m in the revised proposal.**
- **WLE is providing the strict minimum information regarding the project planning and associated budget.**
- **It is difficult to assess the ‘value for money’ of this proposal.**
- **Dependency on W1/W2= 51%**
- **Budget trend= +22%**

ISPC Review:

- In the October 2011 commentary on the revised proposal, the ISPC recommended approval, subject to a series of revisions being made to the program. At least 3 issues are still relevant:
 - Focusing on real hypotheses for rigorous, objective testing, rather than statements of pre-assigned beliefs for which information will be sought to provide justification
 - Better integration of an ecosystem services perspective into the specific problem sets
 - Productivity – ecosystem services trade-offs needed better integration into concepts used at the level of specific projects .
- The most specific and central concern for the ISPC is the need for WLE to reconsider the balance between aspirations for high-level policy impacts and more plausible national / regional level innovations.

- Thus the ISPC recommends that for funding to be provided for the extension phase, WLE should undertake to a) provide an update on its complete workplan and budget for 2015-2016 to the Consortium Board advising whether the extensive bilateral funding is to be aligned with CRP activities or otherwise, b) develop much more comprehensive descriptions of its Flagship projects, their intended activities and outcomes and comprehensive budgets for each, for consideration by the ISPC, and c) consider that within and across the WLE FPs an appropriate balance should be struck between research at sentinel sites/given locations geared to developing best practice and concrete outcomes (for water, land and other ecosystem services) against CRP involvement with higher level international policy processes.
- There is no description of which ecosystem services are being targeted by this CRP
- The extension proposal provides a generic impact pathway that could have been extracted from a general theory of change text and provides no insight whatsoever into how WLE's theory of change will achieve outputs contribute to the achievements of outcomes and IDOs and progress towards impact.
- It is also impossible to judge the feasibility of the impact pathways, as they have not yet been developed.
- The Workplan for 2015-2016 is presented as a table without any narrative support. Its presentation as outputs and outcomes without activities makes it difficult to assess how feasible the achievements are. Without a supporting narrative, it is not possible to judge how elements have been aligned, adapted or ended appropriately, nor is it particularly helpful in assessing the contribution of WLE activities to IDOs and SLOs.
- WLE should publish a much more detailed Workplan for 2015 and 2016. The lack of information in the Workplan makes it difficult to judge the coherence of the budget requested to the one originally proposed.
- It is a notable feature of the information provided on the overall budget for the period 2012-2016 that bilateral and W3 funding is expected to be USD 163 million compared to a budgeted value of USD 80 million. This brings the total budget for the CRP to USD 323 million over the period 2012 to 2016. The CRP will need authorization to increase their bilateral commitments.
- There is considerable heterogeneity in size of the six proposed flagship projects.
- There are few examples (described in this proposal) of solid collaborations with other CRPs. WLE needs to invest in further developing collaborations with other CRPs.
- What WLE presents as its phased work plan for 2015-2016 is not a work plan but a list of outputs and outcomes.
- Costs of programme management and coordination, at US\$9.7m for 2 years, appear exorbitant compared to the other CRPs. WLE needs to spell out what it includes under this heading to explain the very high figures.

Revised proposal and ISPC Comments:

- The ISPC is satisfied that WLE has made a number of important changes to the CRP, that the Extension Proposal is improved as a result, and should be approved.
- Comments on the level of ambition have been fully accepted by the CRP and in the revised extension proposal of September 2014 they have adjusted their focus and ambition to the National and Regional scale where they have a comparative advantage.
- ISPC appreciated the adjustments on the Theory of Change
- The budget in the revised and resubmitted version is now broken down by funding stream by flagship / core theme, which helps in understanding the areas where the W1 and W2 monies are going, and where there is a lot of W3 and bilateral funding being raised. The costs for Project Management and Coordination are now broken down into lines for research support, communication, and management. The budget tables now provide the minimum necessary information.

Revised proposal and Consortium Comments:

- WLE's totally re-written extension proposal addresses the key points raised by the CO and ISPC
 - This new structure is more convincing than the previous one. The overall coherence of this structure is however still not totally clear, as irrigation systems and water management seem to be omnipresent compared to land and soils. We strongly recommend that WLE uses the 2 year extension to further work on its structure so it is more clearly appropriate to a program working on water, land and ecosystems and more clearly integrated.
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