Fund Council

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WORKING DOCUMENT

BACKGROUND NOTE:
The CGIAR Fund’s Support for ICARDA’s Investment Plan

Submitted by:
Fund Office
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CGIAR Fund Office, April, 2014
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ICARDA creates technological innovations that support farmers in diverse dryland areas, including many living in fragile and post-conflict communities in Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine, Pakistan, Egypt, Yemen, Central Asia, Libya, Eritrea, Iraq, and Ethiopia.

ICARDA leads the CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Systems which targets the reduction of vulnerability in low-potential and marginal drylands, and sustainable intensification of agricultural production systems for higher potential drylands. ICARDA is also a partner in CGIAR Research Programs for Grain Legumes, Wheat, Dryland Cereals, Water, Land & Ecosystems and the Genebanks. ICARDA’s unique value lies in its thirty-five years of refining integrated agro-ecosystems approaches in more than forty dryland countries, and developing crop varieties, effective water and land management practices, and integrated crop-livestock production systems.

Supporting ICARDA’s success is imperative because its current work contributes to solutions to contemporary problems arising from climate change, food insecurity, conflict, and scarcity of water and arable land. This note describes ICARDA’s challenges due to the ongoing Syrian civil war and CGIAR’s support for ICARDA’s recovery plan.

ICARDA’S RECOVERY STRATEGY: LOSS MITIGATION AND INVESTMENT PLANS

The conflict in Syria shut-down activities at ICARDA’s headquarters in Tel Hadya, Syria; increased ICARDA’s operational costs due to relocation; and required new infrastructure investments to replace the forcibly abandoned plant and equipment.

On nearly 1000 hectares at its headquarters site in Tel Hadya, ICARDA had established a fully functional experimental station with the Center’s genebank, research laboratories, a livestock research unit with an elite breeding flock of sheep and goats, and new state of the art bio-containment facility for its pathology and biotechnology research. As described below, due to the loss of access to Tel Hadya’s facilities, many of ICARDA’s programs have been halted.

Genetic Resources and the Gene Bank: ICARDA’s genebank holds more than 141,000 accessions of landraces and wild relatives of its mandate crops (bread and durum wheat, barley, fava bean, chickpea, lentil, field pea and grass pea, forages, and rangeland species). Following occupation of Tel Hadya by armed combatants, the distribution of accessions ceased.

Plant breeding: Breeders no longer have access to ICARDA’s state of the art facilities. To resume operations, the breeding programme needs to acquire new equipment.
Seed Multiplication and Seed Health Testing: At Tel Hadya, the Seed Section had land for seed production; machinery for field operations; a medium-size seed cleaning and treatment plant; seed quality testing laboratory; and a conditioned medium-term storage facility for elite seed and international nurseries. These have been lost.

Disease Screening: The disease screening and seed health testing facilities at Tel Hadya, which were recently upgraded, are no longer accessible. Wheat rust analysis was effectively stopped after brand new containment facilities in Tel Hadya had to be abandoned.

Water and Land Management Research: ICARDA’s research program on water and land management has lost access to its facilities at Tel Hadya including soil, water and physiology laboratories, and demonstration fields on water harvesting and supplemental irrigation.

Rangeland, Forage and Livestock Research: ICARDA’s feed analysis and digestibility lab, milking parlor, and dairy product lab for added value product for rural women were looted and the equipment destroyed. ICARDA’s flock of improved breeding sheep, which had been housed with collaborating farmers in Syria, was stolen. The flock of high performing rams and ewes has been reduced from 400 to 130 head.

ICARDA’s board and management have moved aggressively to mitigate losses and protect its research and development programs. However, the return to normal operations (and preparation for the needs of a post-conflict Syria) will rely on strong funding support.

As the conflict escalated, ICARDA first moved to protect its staff. The board authorized use of the Center’s reserves to relocate staff to neighboring countries. This action, costing over $3 million, depleted ICARDA’s resources. The next step was to seek ways to continue the research and services to farmers by moving to new work sites where possible. ICARDA drew on strong partnerships in the region to secure temporary shelter of various activities with several of the region’s national agricultural research systems (NARS).

ICARDA developed a recovery plan that requires rationalization of activities, decentralization of operations, and investment in infrastructure. The management of ICARDA feels that the conflict in ICARDA’s host country Syria has again exposed the vulnerability of a centralized organization situated in the Middle East. (Up to 2012, 80% of ICARDA’s staff was working from the Tel Hadya location.) ICARDA decided to decentralize and to rebuild its operations across several regional platforms. The eight countries/locations selected by ICARDA for its decentralized operations are: two headquarters (Lebanon and Jordan), three Integrated Research Platforms (Morocco, Ethiopia, India), and three Specific Thematic Research Sites (Turkey, Egypt, Central Asia).

ICARDA is confident that this plan will work as this is not the first time that ICARDA has coped with strife or used a decentralized model. In 1977, ICARDA established its headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon; a lowland research station in Aleppo, Syria; and a highland research station in Tabriz, Iran. Given the civil strife in Lebanon in 1981, ICARDA’s headquarters were transferred from Lebanon to its principal research station at Tel Hadya, Syria. Given its experiences with conflict, ICARDA is
confident that with appropriate financial support, its recovery plan will enable it to weather the ongoing challenges and continue to thrive.

**ICARDA’S STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE CGIAR FUND**

ICARDA sought financial support to cover (a) the costs of the immediate mitigation measures of $3.234 million, and (b) the cost of needed investments in the field, laboratory and office facilities and equipment of $13 million. **ICARDA requested a total of $16.234 million.**

After discussion with the principals of ICARDA, the CGIAR Consortium (CO) recommended a financial contribution from the CGIAR Fund for ICARDA’s revitalization plans, as earmarked contributions through the relevant CGIAR Research Programs as follows:

- Up to **$4M in 2014 (for 2013-14)** and **$2M in 2015** to support ICARDA’s Investment Plan through the six CGIAR research programs in which ICARDA is engaged.
- A reserve up to **$1.5M to support ICARDA’s Investment Plan in 2016.**

The CO has already identified investments worth $3.8M in 2014 and $1.6M in 2015, respectively (See Table 1 below).

The CGIAR is deeply committed to supporting ICARDA. The CGIAR Fund has committed money (47% of the ICARDA’S request) and the CGIAR community is providing expertise and management time to the recovery efforts.

**Table 1: ICARDA Recovery and CRP (3-year phased funding) Budget Already Allocated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>CGIAR APPROVED TOTAL</th>
<th>% of ICARDA REQUEST</th>
<th>REQUEST BY ICARDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dryland Systems</strong></td>
<td>CRP 1.1</td>
<td>657,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>657,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHEAT</strong></td>
<td>CRP 3.1</td>
<td>881,000</td>
<td>238,000</td>
<td><strong>1,119,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>46%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grain Legumes</strong></td>
<td>CRP 3.5</td>
<td>564,000</td>
<td>330,000</td>
<td><strong>894,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>45%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dryland Cereals</strong></td>
<td>CRP 3.6</td>
<td>566,000</td>
<td>355,000</td>
<td><strong>921,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WLE</strong></td>
<td>CRP 5</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>180,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genebanks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>953,000</td>
<td>657,000</td>
<td><strong>1,610,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>96%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3,801,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,580,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,381,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>41%</strong></td>
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