



Fund

## **Fund Council**

**12<sup>th</sup> Meeting (FC12)—Brussels, Belgium**  
**November 4-5, 2014**

### ***WORKING DOCUMENT***

*Consortium Response, dated 14 July 2014*

*Submitted by:*  
*Consortium Office*

14 July 2014

Dear Maarten and Mahmoud,

Please find attached reports from the Consortium Office and the ISPC on your extension proposal. We recognize that the production of the extension proposal represented a large amount of work and think it appropriate that I briefly summarise the process that we adopted to review and assess your proposal. The Consortium Science Team independently evaluated each of the 15 extension proposals received and scored them based on the criteria established under the Extension Call guidelines. These are summarized below:

- Conceptual clarity, innovative thinking, scientific quality.
- Coherence of the proposed program and internal coherence of the set of activities within it.
- Coherence of the program and its sets of activities at portfolio level: is the CRP is working effectively with other CRPs, so there are no unplanned redundancies or gaps in the portfolio level research agenda.
- Quality and relevance of the IDOs proposed and of their indicators and targets- feasibility and credibility of the measures of progress proposed by the CRP.
- Relevance of these sets of activities to the SLOs and the CRP's IDOs.

The process involved a full week of face-to-face review meetings in Montpellier (23rd to 27th June 2014) and involved the full Science Team represented by myself, Anne-Marie Izac, Philippe Ellul, Anita Regmi, Jacqui Ashby, Luis Solorzano and Marie de Lattre-Gasquet. On the 2nd of July we received reports from the ISPC on each of the CRP extension proposals. We reviewed these comments alongside our own independent assessments and subsequently integrated substantial and substantiated comments from the ISPC with those of the Science Team. Both the Science Team and ISPC commentaries are attached for your perusal. You will see that even though the ISPC commentary is written from a somewhat different perspective, there is a high level of congruence between the ISPC's comments and our assessments.

I also attach a bibliometric analysis of CRP publication and citation data mainly in the period 2011-2013. This is for your information and did **not** form part of the evaluation process but is likely to receive greater attention in future, I shall be writing to you separately on this matter.

We recognise the importance and significance of the Dryland Systems as part of a balanced portfolio of CGIAR Research Programs, Arid and semi-arid environments present very significant challenges for agriculture. It is therefore essential for the CRP portfolio to include a robust body of work on technology integration, policy and institutional innovations to address the specific challenges in these environments. However the extension proposal is poor and does not provide a compelling case for this critical



component of the CGIAR research portfolio. We are committed to advancing this important area of research for development but do not feel that a re-submission of this extension proposal is appropriate. Many of the issues that both the Consortium Office and the ISPC raise are both substantive and persistent. Under these circumstances we are recommending to the Consortium Board to establish an Independent Task Force that will work with the incoming CRP Director, Dr Richard Thomas and the Science Advisory Board to identify mission critical areas of research that need to be supported short-term. In addition to develop and design a strategy and operating plan that will position DS to play a leading role in the evolution of the next round of CRPs. The terms of reference for the Independent Task Force will be shared with you by the 21<sup>st</sup> July.

We trust that you will view our recommendation positively and understand that our intent is to support and facilitate the development of this vital CRP in a collaborative manner. We look forward to engaging constructively with you and your partners in further advancing the CGIAR research portfolio.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Powell".

Wayne Powell

Chief Science Officer