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## **Fund Council**

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### ***WORKING DOCUMENT***

*CO Comments to CRPs regarding 2015-2016  
CRP Extension Proposals  
CRP WHEAT*

*Submitted by:  
Consortium Office*



## CO Comments to CRPs regarding 2015-2016 CRP Extension Proposals

### CRP Name: WHEAT

#### A. Overall assessment of the Extension Proposal

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).

The five WHEAT FPs are well-balanced between upstream research (Seed, increased drought tolerance, nitrogen use efficiency, etc.) and complementary downstream activities focused on new variety development with different traits transferred to modern wheat varieties (FP3) and other sustainable cultural practices (FP4). The four FPs – including capacity building (FP5) - are being prioritized and driven by foresight analysis and impact, targeting and adoption studies through FP1.

Apart from involving independent experts from academia, regional organizations and the private sector in the governing and management CRP committees, WHEAT also involves ARIs and NARS in new approaches for Genomic Selection (CoA 3.2) or for leading different CoAs on advanced research topics such as biological nitrification inhibition with Cornell (CoA 2.5), rust resistance with JIRCAS (CoA 3.4) and wheat hybrids production with the private sector (CoA 2.2). WHEAT also links with substantive investments in key regional collaborations.

The newly restructured WHEAT directly addresses 5 common Intermediate Development Outcomes (IDOs): productivity (IDO 1), food security (IDO 2), income (IDO 4), gender empowerment (IDO 5), and environment (IDO 9). The other 6 IDOs are targeted via other CRPs (Systems programs, CCAFS) or in collaboration with other CRPs. Under FP4 WHEAT currently collaborates with GRiSP, MAIZE, Dryland Systems and CCAFS. WHEAT is also planning to work even more closely with A4NH in FP3 and 4; PIM through FP1, 4 and 5; CCAFS in FP2, 3 and 4 and the Systems CRPs in FP2, 3 and 4.

The WHEAT phased work-plan is presented in a very comprehensive and clear 4-page table identifying the 5FPs with their CoAs matched to deliverable at different stage of discovery, validation and scale-out. High strategic priorities are precisely identified and mapped to the phased work-plan by FP and CoA. The activities to be implemented by WHEAT through the FPs and CoAs in collaboration with different partners are relevant



and well-articulated to address the 6 selected IDOs and contribute to the 4 CGIAR System Level Outcomes (SLOs).

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.

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.

### **B. Specific points that WHEAT needs to address**

- 1) Intermediate development Outcomes (IDOs), Theories of Change (ToC) and Impact Pathways (IP)
  - a) The WHEAT ToC is supported by 2 complementary research strategies on "Germplasm" and "Sustainable Intensification of Wheat Systems". The IP for the second research strategy is presented (Fig.2), unfortunately the IP for the first research strategy on "germplasm" is missing. WHEAT needs to provide the IP for 'Germplasm' and the two complementary IPs have to be inter-linked to fully explain the expected WHEAT Impact Pathway.
  - b) The indicators presented in Table 2 are generic; metrics and specific targets have to be identified and, if possible, the methodological process for arriving to these metrics explained.
- 2) Gender
  - a) The overall assessment is satisfactory; however the proposal template asks for a section on 'Gender in the Workplace', this section is currently missing.
- 3) Partnerships
  - a) Internally, within WHEAT, there is need to further clarify the respective roles of each Center in the FPs and CoAs. This will help to present WHEAT to the stakeholders as a strongly coordinated and balanced program between CIMMYT and ICARDA.
  - b) For partnerships with other CRPs, a comprehensive table explaining, for each WHEAT/CRP partnership, the model of the collaborative approach with a precise "Give and/or take" description is presented. WHEAT needs to link these collaborations with the



work-plan indicating: the CRPs responsible for specific CoAs; the budget allocated to each collaboration and how the cost for funding the CoAs is shared.

- c) The private sector is a key partner for two CoAs: CoA 2.2 – for producing affordable hybrids and CoA 5.3 – for training next generation of scientists through the Wheat University and a post-doc programme. WHEAT should explain the following: Which are the general terms of the agreements with the private sector? Are the conditions dependent on the size (turnover) of the company? Is the support similar for start-up and other SMEs? Which are the Intellectual Property arrangements in these collaborations, and are they aligned with the CGIAR Intellectual Assets Policy?
- 4) Phased Work-Plan for 2015-16
    - a) In the phased work-plan, the relation from one phase to the other for a given CoA is frequently missing or not clear between 2015 and 2016. WHEAT needs to present precise links and provide a timeframe between the discovery phase and the next steps on validation and scaling-out. For instance, if an activity is in validation in 2015, one would expect it to be brought to the scale-out phase in 2016 or for additional deliverables to be proposed if that activity was planned for a 2-year period.
  - 5) Budget 2015-16
    - a) An extra budget is requested for “Bioinformatics and open access database” (CoA 3.2). In this connection, two additional activities are proposed: first, to drive forward the informatics/genomics data back office in wheat, in collaboration with Cornell University; and, secondly, for setting up and implementing an informatics breeding management system (similar to the BMS developed by IBP or equivalent). These activities need to be precisely described in the work-plan and budget for 2015-16.
    - b) In the case of increased “precision phenotyping” (CoA 3.3) for different traits and locations (CoA 3.3), WHEAT is planning to set up 7 platforms in Morocco, Sudan (2015) and India, Ethiopia, Uruguay, Pakistan and Turkey (2016). Drought, heat and disease tolerance are the main traits to be evaluated with a cost of between US\$500k and US\$750k per platform, depending on the trait evaluated and location. However, the scientific/technological arguments supporting such cost differences (e.g. number of sites per country, surface rent in hectares, technological support, equipment, staff cost) are not explained. We expect the following set of comments for this priority: Is WHEAT following a strategic plan for saving money from the installation of the first platform to the others? What is the rationale for prioritizing countries/traits for these platforms? Are there any lessons learnt from the 1<sup>st</sup> platform in Kenya, for rust tolerance evaluation, to be applied to the new ones? Does the budget per platform include the annual operational costs? If not, how much are they?
    - c) 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



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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.