Dear Members of the Consortium Office, ISPC and FUND Council:

I am pleased to submit the revised version of the proposal for the “CGIAR Platform on Excellence in Breeding: Tools and services that create synergies and accelerate genetic gains of breeding programs targeting the developing world”. The proponents would like to thank the ISPC, external reviewers and System Office staff for their thoughtful and valuable feedback, and the time taken to carefully review the proposal.

The proposal was developed with input from AfricaRice, Bioversity, CIAT, CIMMYT, CIP, CIRAD, Cornell University, the Global Crop Diversity Trust, the Integrated Breeding Platform, ICARDA, ICRAF, ICRISAT, IITA, ILRI, IRD, IRRI, JIRCAS, Nottingham University and WorldFish. It benefited from the insights and feedback from the ISPC, Fund Council members, and Consortium Office staff, provided as part of the 2nd Phase Guidelines, during a workshop held in San Diego on 13-15 January 2016, and thereafter during a call-in session on 9 February 2016.

A face-to-face meeting in San Diego on 13-15 January 2016, with participation from all Agrifood Systems (AFS) CRPs, was crucial to define the rationale and scope; platform modules, their objectives and work packages; the accountability framework between AFS CRPs or external members and the platform; governance and management. The meeting showed strong alignment by participants over the platform objectives. The proposal content was developed with great energy and a collegial and pragmatic spirit, both during the meeting and thereafter by several writing teams.

The CGIAR centers and AFS CRPs involved consider this coordinating platform to bring tremendous value to their breeding programs. It will change the way breeding targeted at the developing world will be done - by CGIAR centers, NARS and the local private sector - and connected with the advances in ARIs and the multinational private sector. The basis for this is: identification, development and promotion of best practices; aligned metrics and standards; tested tools; and access to expert advice and common services.

I would like to thank Dr Marianne Banziger who coordinated the workshop and proposal development. I really think that this proposal adds value to the portfolio of CRPs submitted to the Consortium.

With best regards,

Martin J. Kropff
Director General, CIMMYT