

Summary of ExCo 13 Discussion and Decision on CP (Cycle 2) Selection of Pre-Proposals¹

R. Rabbinge introduced the item noting the SC concluded that only the following three pre-proposals show promise, but recommended all three be revised and resubmitted for SC consideration in early 2008:

- Climate change, agriculture and food security;
- Oasis
- High-value crops – fruits and vegetables

Discussion:

- EIARD agreed with the SC recommendation and noted the SC has taken into account some of the lessons learned, but it is important the design of the full proposals considers other lessons learned, such as on governance. This may require a change in planning and suggested to use the lessons learned to redesign the process in subsequent CP cycles. EIARD also questioned the January 2008 deadline considering the next ExCo meeting is not until May 2008.
- ExCo should consider asking the SC to look at lessons learned before going forward with the current cycle of CPs or perhaps reopening the competition.
- One of the objectives of CPs is to encourage collaboration among Centers, in addition to encouraging partnerships from outside the System. On a topic like climate change, there is room for all Centers to work in an interdisciplinary way.
- Financial support to the proponents could be considered in order to make significant progress between now and resubmission of the pre-proposals.
- On partnerships, concern was expressed about the lack of NARS involvement in the design of CPs. The Alliance noted that it is difficult to choose partners at the pre-proposal stage when research sites have not yet been identified.
- One member asked whether CPs have created the cooperation among Centers and also with partners which was envisioned; a SWEP could do what a CP does in terms of partnerships and systemwide activity.
- Concern was expressed about reputational risk if the CGIAR does not make a decision on moving forward. Despite the low-quality of the pre-proposals, these are important areas of research.
- K. Sierra highlighted particular importance of the CGIAR providing a leadership role on climate change, especially on adaptation, and the need to act quickly. The CGIAR should be able to announce its position at the upcoming international conference on climate change in Bali in December 2007.
- Several members agreed that the CGIAR can not stay silent on climate change. It was suggested that a broader initiative would be a more appropriate research vehicle to address climate change and gaps could be filled by a CP.
- The CGIAR is already doing a great deal of work on climate change and this could be used as a starting point for a broader initiative.

¹ Excerpt from Thirteenth Meeting of the CGIAR Executive Council (October 16-17, 2007) Summary Record of Proceedings, November 2, 2007.

- Taking into account the concerns and suggestions of ExCo members, R. Rabbinge suggested that ExCo consider the option to (a) recommend the pre-proposals on Oasis and High-value crops be revised to incorporate CP lessons learned and resubmitted for SC consideration as suggested by the SC; and reopen the competition if the revised pre-proposals still do not meet ExCo approval, and (b) develop a broader CGIAR initiative on climate change that includes a paper on what the CGIAR is already doing in the area; “fast-tracking” development of the CP full proposal, and organizing a conference on climate change in 2008 to bring together leading researchers and consortia to move the agenda forward. This could be announced at Bali in December 2007.
- Communication on the process must be clear on whatever decisions are taken regarding CPs.

Conclusion and ExCo Decision:

- *ExCo expressed appreciation to the Science Council for its assessment of the Challenge Program Cycle 2 Pre-proposals.*
- *ExCo also expressed disappointment with the low quality of the pre-proposals, but recognized these are important research areas and the CGIAR should signal a willingness to move forward.*
- *With respect to the pre-proposals on Oasis and High-value Crops, ExCo decided the following:*
 - 1) *The proponents of the pre-proposals on Oasis and High-value Crops should incorporate lessons learned from the first cycle of CPs presented at ExCo 13, and guided by inputs from the SC on the pre-proposals, develop full proposals for SC review.*
 - 2) *Oasis should be submitted by February 29, 2008, for assessment by SC and discussion and recommendation at ExCo 14.*
 - 3) *High-value Crops should be submitted at the latest by July 31, 2008, if not earlier for assessment by SC and discussion and recommendation at ExCo 15.*
 - 4) *After submission of the full proposals, if ExCo does not believe the full proposals are of sufficient quality, they would be withdrawn from further consideration.*
- *With respect to Climate Change, ExCo decided:*
 - 1) *The Alliance, Science Council, and CGIAR Secretariat should take stock of where we are on work that is already being undertaken within the CGIAR on climate change and use this as a basis to develop a strategic initiative on climate change to be announced in December 2007, in order to position the CGIAR as a leader in climate change research. This should be available two weeks prior to AGM07 for review and endorsement by the CGIAR Membership.*
 - 2) *The proponents of the pre-proposal on climate change should incorporate lessons learned from the first cycle of CPs, comments from the SC, and information on gaps identified by the stock taking, and develop a more focused full proposal for submission to SC by February 29, 2008, for assessment by SC and discussion and recommendation at ExCo 14.*

- 3) *In addition, the CGIAR would convene a conference in 2008 on climate change to bring together key representatives of the international research community to identify ways to move the mitigation and adaptation agendas forward.*
- *To initiate proposal development, proponents should seek clarification and guidance from the Science Council.*