



Dr Marco Ferroni
Chair
CGIAR System Management Board

25th September 2017

Dear Marco,

RE: ISPC review of the CRP proposal for Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals Agri-food Systems

ICRISAT and our partners thank the ISPC for their review of the GLDC Proposal and their judgement of GLDC as a 'sound research proposal' with a 'good' rating (B+). Precedence from 2016 suggests this rating can enable GLDC to be submitted to the CGIAR Systems Council for approval for funding allocation and inception in 2018. We thank the SMB for the opportunity to provide a brief response to the ISPC review.

Precedence suggests that a 'weak' ISPC rating for a CRP Flagship Program (FP) can excise that FP from CRP approval, funding and implementation. With full knowledge of this possible outcome, the ISPC still provided a rating of 'weak' to a Flagship they judged as "key to the success of the CRP" – FP2: Transforming Agri-food Systems. It is difficult to consider a GLDC CRP devoid of this essential component that addresses issues of markets, institutions and the enabling environment for GLDC crops where transformation will be key to delivering of the SRF and SDGs in the dryland ecologies.

My request to the Systems Management Board is to help the GLDC proposal gain support at the Systems Council and to commence operations in 2018 as a critical and complete addition to the CRP portfolio. The opportunity to revise and resubmit 'weak' FPs was provided to other CRPs in 2016, albeit with a 12 months deferral on resubmission. Such remedial action and timeframe is far less conducive to GLDC where only five years of implementation remain.

Our suggestions, therefore, for the SMB to consider include:

1. Seek advice from the Expert Panel, initially established by the SMB to recommend writing instructions for the GLDC proposal. Can the Expert Panel advise the SMB on the submitted GLDC proposal and particularly on the viability and essential additions for FP2?
2. Provide the GLDC proponents a short time to resubmit a revised FP2 and related overview that explicitly addresses ISPC concerns with this Flagship. This period can be as short as two weeks; we will accept whatever period is sufficient for ISPC to review before the SC meeting (9-10th Nov 2017).
3. Allow GLDC FP2 Partners – CSIRO, CRS, CARE, AGRA, Microsoft, GAIN, Farm Africa, Self Employed Women's Association, etc. – to offer their explicit written commitment to support for GLDC and an assurance that they will proactively partner in the FP2 agenda.

4. Ask the donors who have indicated W2 support for GLDC what is their perspective on GLDC and, in particular, FP2. In this regard, we suggest seeking ACIAR's input in particular.

In this response to the ISPC review, we refrain from rebuttal of criticisms, despite some clear errors of fact in the review (e.g. % resources allocated to the management) or seemingly differential assessment standards compared with other higher rated CRPs (e.g. size of out-year funding gaps). ICRIAT and its partners appreciate the ISPC feedback and will work to address such concerns if GLDC progresses to approval.

I look forward to the SMB's positive support in enabling the GLDC CRP to join the CGIAR CRP portfolio. Of course, if you have any questions, please do contact me.

Yours sincerely,



David Bergvinson
Director General

Cc: Elwyn Grainger-Jones, Peter Gardiner, Nigel Kerby, Peter Carberry