

This is a resource document to SC5 Agenda Item 9. It is a one-page reply from 4 of the 5 flagships to the ISPC review of their re-submitted addenda to seek a green light for W1/2 funding.

## Response from CRP/FP leadership to the ISPC Assessment of **FISH Flagship 2** (Small-Scale Fisheries) of the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (2017-2022)

25 September 2017

**Introduction.** We welcome the ISPC rating of the revised FP2 as strong, the recognition of positive improvements made over the original (which was also rated strong) and reiteration that the goal of promoting and sustaining small-scale fisheries deserves to be part of the CGIAR's agenda. The confidence in the experienced FP leadership and their ability to support SSF transformation within the proposed budget and timeframe is also appreciated.

**Research to impact.** We also welcome the ISPC recognition that the revised FP2 proposal "*demonstrates a very good understanding*" of the complexity of achieving systemic change. The comment on change mechanisms and the "*narrow focus on influencing governments and donors with evidence from community-level studies*" suggests a more limited path to enabling large-scale change than is intended. Whilst FP2 does incorporate community-level research, the revised proposal describes four change mechanisms to achieve positive outcomes at, and across, different levels, with bottom-up community derived research proposed as only one of these mechanisms. Other pathways to impact, for example, include national and regional-level analyses and convening to deliberate evidence and policy options, as well as partnerships with international governmental organizations, industry associations and civil society organizations, all critical in influencing national and international norms. The emphasis on systematic testing, comparison and learning on the efficacy of different change mechanisms, is articulated in hypotheses addressing routes to influence management, policy and governance (hypotheses 3, 4 and 7) and to enable institutional change (hypotheses 5 and 6).

**Implementation science.** The ISPC considers much FP2 research as "*implementation science*" but suggests a need to clarify the engagement with other bodies of work on fisheries biology, ecology, economics and policy. We acknowledge that the articulation of disciplinary research could have been made more explicit (e.g., through an expansion of Table 2.6). We note however that fisheries biology, ecology and economics are disciplinary strengths of the science partnerships deliberately brought together in the FP2 coalition that will contribute to disciplinary and interdisciplinary aspects of the SSF research agenda. The RBM approach adopted in FP2 (and across the FISH CRP) will specifically allow us to identify gaps and draw on knowledge and experiences of partners as the program learning evolves; this adaptive approach increases the likelihood of success in addressing the complex global development challenge of small-scale fisheries.

**CRP Coherence.** We appreciate the ISPC assessment highlighting the significance of FP2 and its fisheries research agenda as necessary and complementary within the CRP portfolio, and in meeting the CGIAR SLOs. Within the broader CRP portfolio, the FISH CRP is uniquely positioned to reach some of the most marginalised coastal and inland people reliant on fish for livelihoods and food and nutrition security, and to improve sustainability outcomes in domains that no other CRP will address. Failing to invest W1/W2 resources in this agenda would undermine the credibility of the portfolio in responding to the full scope of the challenges laid out in the SRF. Moreover, at the FISH CRP level, the linkages between aquaculture and fisheries research are fundamental to the CRP design and its potential to drive innovation, from production systems (e.g., integrated fish-rice landscapes, alternative aquafeeds) to broader agri-food systems (e.g., joint analysis of both subsectors in contributing to regional nutrition security).

**Follow up.** We note and welcome the ISPC request that further articulation of the science agenda underpinning desired institutional and policy changes be provided in the first annual report. Fortunately, bilaterally-funded research partnerships during 2017 have provided an excellent foundation for detailed planning within the FP2 science agenda. A recently concluded SSF Symposium, interactions with major events (e.g., the UN Ocean Conference), and engagement with policy bodies are helping ensure this agenda targets research in response to high leverage opportunities for influence. Confirmation of W1/W2 funding for 2018 will enable convening of key research and development partners in early 2018, kick-starting essential integrative elements of the FP2 research agenda. We intend to submit updated plans reflecting these advances concurrently with the 2017 CRP report.

Bogor, 23 September 2017

Marco Ferroni, Chair, CGIAR SMB  
Elwyn Grainger-Jones, Executive-Director, CGIAR SMO

**Re: FTA Flagship Program 2**

FTA takes note of the positive evaluation and “strong” rating by the ISPC of the resubmitted FTA FP2 proposal on trees for smallholder livelihoods (submitted 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017). This is an important outcome for the collective work of all the FTA scientists involved in reformulating the flagship proposal.

We are pleased by the endorsement by ISPC that FTA FP2 research is of very high quality, with a “robust theory of change”, “a clear strategy for impact” and a research-in-development approach to generate international public goods that “is coherent, and if implemented well, can set an example for other CRPs”.

As a consequence, and in order to enable FTA FP2 to deliver on its expected outputs and outcomes, we now request the System Management Board and the System Council to concomitantly (i) lift the ban on FP 2 receiving W1+2 funds from January 1, 2018 onward and (ii) reinstate in full the W1+2 resources requested in the FTA full proposal’s finplan, for the duration of the remainder of phase 2. This implies authorizing FTA to receive a W1+2 level of funding starting at USD 11.5m for 2018. For historical reasons (independent from performance) FTA is among the CRPs receiving the lowest amount of W1+2 funds.

The resubmitted FP2 proposal clearly explains how W1+2 resources are critical for achieving FTA FP2’s theory of change, to drive the overall research portfolio, as well as to allow the generation of international public goods, enabling the understanding of how contextual factors affect the performance of options.

Yours sincerely,

Anne-Marie Izac  
Chair,  
Independent Steering Committee of FTA

Vincent Gitz  
Director,  
FTA

## Response to the ISPC Assessment of **Livestock FP-3** (Livestock feeds and forages) of the Livestock CRP

ILRI and the Livestock CRP management wishes to bring to the attention of the System Management Board a number of points on the ISPC review regarding the 'weak' grade this flagship received.

**ISPC's acknowledgement of the "high strategic relevance [of] animal nutrition as a constraint to productivity increases"**. Simple biology explains the critical role of feed to achieve the gains from the full range of livestock research and hence the coherence of the CRP Theory of Change relies in part on the feeds component. This in and of itself does not justify approval of the flagship, but it is important to recognize the obvious implications for the ability of the overall CRP to achieve impact.

**The lack of criticism of the quality of science proposed by the flagship.** The three main 'weaknesses' relate to track record and the ability of the flagship to take results to scale, comparative advantage and lack of information, rather than the science itself where ISPC's particular mandate lies. Issues raised in the review therefore relate primarily to information gaps and qualitative judgements, not to questioning the proposed science. In our understanding, the absence of science-based objections from ISPC and the earlier strong endorsement from the donors should be important considerations in the decisions going forward.

**The contradiction in assessment between the ISPC and the donors as regards two main ISPC concerns: potential for the flagship to achieve impact and questionable CG comparative advantage.** Regarding the first concern, the previous (pending the outcome of the current exercise) strongly positive donor assessment of the flagship is based on donor intelligence about development investor needs and opportunities. As to the second concern, the strong donor endorsement of CG comparative advantage is at odds with the ISPC view. The ISPC conclusion appears based on a perception that the flagship outputs are largely limited to improved forages, whereas the revised proposal lays out a more balanced portfolio with W1/2 investment in upstream work for both forages and dual purpose crops reduced to 50%, with the remainder dedicated to enable foresight assessment and feed strategies and technologies delivered and tailored to local contexts. The ISPC review also concludes that the "assertion that seed multinationals rely on CG breeding program for cultivars is insufficient to make a case for investment": rather, this was intended to demonstrate the absence of alternative suppliers. The ISPC review cites Embrapa's stronger track record but the reviewers do not appear to be aware that CG bred next-generation Brachiaria cultivars (the most widely distributed planted forage) were commercialized with private partners a decade before Embrapa's first outputs or that Embrapa's ability to deliver focuses on Latin America and its particular environments versus the global scope of the CG efforts, including smaller scale systems and marginal areas. Only the CG was able to support NARS in responding, for example, to Napier disease outbreaks in East Africa.

**Misleading points in the review should also be taken into account.** ISPC characterizes the successful partnership of CIAT forage research with a company as "public funds underwriting R&D efforts". In fact, the R&D work is fully funded by the company and it is instead an excellent example of the type of innovative CG-private sector partnership that donors encourage the CG to develop. Such partnerships help protect centres' core capacity and create opportunities for added value, including introducing traits that benefit producers in difficult environments, while providing a direct pathway to scale as local private sector capacity is developed.

**The apparent contradiction between the low priority given to the upstream genetics and breeding work by ISPC and the higher priority we were instructed to give W1/2 investment in such research** by representatives of the Fund Council during the CRP proposal development.

Based on these concerns, we urge that SMB advise approval for W1/2 funding to the flagship.

[Information note: Livestock did not offer any additional submissions on FP5, livestock and income, which was supported by the ISPC.](#)

## CGIAR WLE Program: Flagship 5 Response on ISPC Assessment September 2017

We are pleased to have received the ISPC Assessment of WLE Flagship 5, and acknowledge the rating of 'moderate' is a significant improvement. This means that, with WLE's overall "A-" score and 4 flagships rated strong in 2016, and one rated moderate in 2017, our flagship scores are now on a par with the highest rated CRPs such as CCAFS, PIM and RTB.

We appreciate the ISPC's recognition of the flagship's '*strategic relevance to the CGIAR CRP portfolio*', and its '*enhanced focus on unintended consequences and trade-offs*', and the changes we made to delivery structure and frameworks, team composition, external partnerships and enhanced focus on capacity development. The redesign took care to focus on critical areas of complementarity with AFS and iCRPs to enable us to more effectively deliver on the 'sustainability' agenda of the CGIAR. We also note the ISPC assessment's concerns, and appreciate the opportunity to add further clarification. FP5 captures some new concepts, and whilst we feel most of the concerns raised are issues we had taken into account during design, they clearly need the benefit of further explanation, which follows.

*On 'the use of quantitative modelling, how it will advance FP5 science, and concerns about how hard, quantitative, model-based analyses will inform participatory co-learning and design under CoA 5.2'.* We have combined these points because the whole flagship is based on the premise that quantitative modelling is vital for helping make sense of the increasing complexity and uncertainty associated with delivering sustainability across multiple targets, and at scale. However, as currently designed and applied, it is rarely delivered in a way that is relevant to decision-makers' needs. Therefore, we aim to advance the science on the process and methods that bring these two domains closer together. That is: how quantitative modelling, when combined with approaches such as decision analysis and other qualitative methods as tested in Phase 1, can deliver information that is directly relevant to decision-makers' needs. And in parallel, how to institute discursive interactive processes between scientists and decision-makers that result in this science being a more effective guide to decisions (see TOC and Section 2.5.1.6).

*On addressing the potential tension between tools of wide applicability and relevance to local contexts: CoA1* will build and refine processes and tools in a collaborative manner. And we will test these across different local contexts and sites in order to ensure that these are relevant and widely transferable. While information on impacts of locally specific decisions derived from the processes and tools testing is locally specific, such information will be brought together across a range of sites for wider relevance.

We are pleased that the assessment recognized the importance of bringing in social scientists, and we are keen to allay concerns that these skills are lacking. This flagship recognised that, given the underpinning transdisciplinary approaches, there are some critical skill gaps to fill – such as in social science, collaboration, participatory approaches and policy engagement. We have allocated a generous budget for external organisations for this purpose, but perhaps this was not clear enough from the narrative.

On the concern, '*how research outputs will make a contribution to the necessary governance changes required to achieve pervasive impact*': this is a chicken and egg situation. Research outputs will deliver insights on impacts of current decision-making, which will lead to identifying what governance changes are needed. We are also not aware of any work of this precise investigative nature within other development partners. Finally, on '*the FP might be disproportionately influenced by bilateral/W3 funding*': we would like to see this the other way around! The FP provides an excellent opportunity to align external funding sources and influence other funders. We have already had discussions with other funding sources to corroborate this, and we recognize that this is an important strategic orientation for future funding security.