Response to Independent Science and Partnership Council’s (ISPC) Review of the MAIZE-AFS CRP pre-Proposal

1. Overall observation on ISPC understanding of the CRP and Portfolio
   a. In general, the ISPC review of the MAIZE-AFS pre-Proposal is positive, constructive and fair. It is greatly appreciated that the report acknowledges the positive influence of the recent IEA MAIZE CRP evaluation report on the development of the MAIZE-AFS pre-proposal.
   b. The ISPC report identifies some gaps in areas where MAIZE-AFS is currently evolving, namely;
      i. Ongoing learning from, and integration of, the systems work of the Humid Tropics CRP and the extension of MAIZE-AFS further down the value-chain and the concomitant emergent partnerships therein.
      ii. Capturing, more explicitly, how MAIZE AFS creates opportunities for youth.
      iii. Developing a better understanding of the dynamics in demand and use of maize products (food, feed, fuel) and research supply (private sector, ARIs, NARS) in the CRP target areas.

2. Any issues of factual inaccuracy?
   a. No, there are no major issues of factual inaccuracy.

3. Concurrence of opinion on recommendations going forward.
   a. See points 1b.i-iii above.
   b. In addition:
      i. MAIZE management agrees that greater efforts should be made to make explicit the incorporation of lessons learned from Phase I and from ongoing dialogue with MAIZE’s national partners.
      ii. MAIZE’s Impact Pathway and Theory of Changes needs to better incorporate the contribution from, and interactions with, other CRPs.

4. Areas where you would request greater clarification.
   a. The ISPC Report is clear and unambiguous. Therefore, there is no need for greater clarification.

5. Areas where you disagree.
   a. MAIZE disagrees with the statement that “no priority alignment or consultations with governments were done”. MAIZE scientists and managers interact with the governments and government agencies, both formally and informally, on a routine basis in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia. These interactions do inform the project prioritization processes of MAIZE. Some examples have been highlighted in the MAIZE AFS Preproposal (see page 4).
b. MAIZE disagrees that *Striga* management is not given a high enough priority. Indeed, integrated Striga management in Africa is an integral part of the MAIZE AFS Preproposal. In fact, *Striga* was mentioned 37 times in the pre-proposal. Developing and deploying new maize hybrids/varieties with Striga resistance, combined with NUE, in *Striga*-affected areas in SSA is one of the important targets of MAIZE (see page 104, 115, 116, 118, 119).

c. The ISPC Report states that there is overall good prioritization in MAIZE FPs, although not systematically based on strategic foresight. MAIZE simply does not have the financial resources to carry out the range of ex-ante studies highlighted in the Report.