

13th October 2010

Ms Inger Andersen
CGIAR Fund Council Chair

Dear Inger,

I am pleased to convey to you the ISPC's Commentary on the proposal for a MegaProgram on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security.

It is clear that much time and participatory consultation has gone into attempting to convert the earlier Challenge Program which was strategically developed to work with partners in the climate science community to provide new insights for agriculture in this area. However, the ISPC finds that whilst the current global context and the case for addressing mitigation of, and adaptation to, the effects of climate change through developing country agriculture are well described, the proposal is in several senses less convincing than the earlier program. It is highly ambitious in its research and policy aims. However, by including the current climate change work of virtually all Centres (with the significant exception of CIFOR) it reduces the focus and possibly the likelihood for success. Indeed the proposal is structured more for the CCAFS to be a platform servicing and, to an extent, co-financing the other Centres and managing climate change policy relationships. Whilst the near term deliverables for the Centres work (possibly contributing through other MPs) are agreed under the terms of their current grant projects, the selection of future promising research avenues are unclear and the claims for the program impacts beyond this period seem unrealistic. The speed of regional development planned also seems too rapid. The ISPC has addressed the issue of governance of MPs in a general sense elsewhere. We believe that the Centre-led model described here is over scripted and may act counter to the benefits of more independent scientific leadership.

The ISPC confirms that there is a strong case for a strategic MP on climate change as part of the CGIAR portfolio and in partnership with the climate science community. Optimism leads from the earlier Challenge Program, the urgent need for many of the ultimate products described by the current proposal, including better understanding of agricultural options in regions of the world having many poor people, In principle the ISPC would therefore endorse such a proposal. However, we consider that the current proposal needs substantial revision. The ISPC suggests that the proponents be asked for a smaller, more strategic new document that shows more independence from the existing CGIAR research portfolio (which may be completed under current funding) and offers a logical time frame for deliverables, including some long-term deliverables with intermediate products.

The ISPC further suggests that as part of the revision process that the Consortium should review models for program management and before the Program coordination is moved from its current location.

The ISPC would be pleased to review a recast proposal for future endorsement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rudy Rabbinge', written in a cursive style.

Rudy Rabbinge,
Chair, ISPC