



Subject: **Consortium Board approval letter on CRP 6 “Forest and Trees: livelihoods, landscapes and governance”**

Date: 3 March 2011

Dear Inger,

The Consortium Board (CB) of the CGIAR has the pleasure to submit to the Fund Council (FC), for its consideration and approval, the CGIAR Research Programme (CRP), entitled **“Forest and Trees: livelihoods, landscapes and governance”**

The proposal submitted by CIFOR, Bioversity, CIAT and the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) contains a number of innovative elements that build on the strengths of these four CGIAR Centers involved, and the experiences and insights of the broader forest science and forest policy communities. The most notable are the emphasis on synergy and integration among multi-disciplinary teams of scientists, development experts and practitioners; the integration across landscapes (forest transition and land cover gradients) and scales (from local to global); an explicit and achievable focus on disadvantaged sectors of society – the poor, indigenous peoples, women and youth; and the inclusion and development of long-term landscape-level research sites: the “sentinel landscapes”.

Since its first submission as a concept note proposal on 3 May of the last year, the CB considered that it was a very good basis for its development into a strong full CRP proposal, in concordance with the assessments provided at that time by two external reviewers.

The second submission by the proponents as a full CRP proposal dated 6 September 2010. It was the subject of three external reviews (including one on Gender), as well as a thorough examination by the CB. A number of comments and recommendations for its improvement were suggested to the proponents in accordance to the common agreed criteria established by the CB and the ISPC for approval of CRPs.

In terms of **strategic coherence and clarity of objectives**, the CB requested to explain what were the priorities among the five components and research themes in the proposal, and to give details about the linkages with CRPs 1 (agricultural systems), 2 (policies and markets) and 5 (water and land). Regarding the linkages with CRP 7 (climate change), the proponents were asked to justify why component 4 (“climate change adaptation and mitigation”) should be part of this CRP, rather than CRP 7, and to explain how redundancies and overlapping were going to be avoided and synergies built between these two CRPs.

In the revised version submitted by the proponents on 7 February 2011, all these issues were very well-addressed. A new detailed section on geographic priorities for each component of the proposal was developed in which the relative priorities among the research themes are explained. In case of a budget shortfall, it is the number of research sites that will be decreased, rather than any thematic research, as all research themes are equally important.



With regards to the linkage among CRPs, the proponents held discussions with the proponents of the above mentioned CRPs and agreed on how the linkages are going to be implemented, such as for example using sentinel landscapes to undertake joint activities, which is an excellent and effective way of addressing these linkages.

The revised version gives a satisfactory explanation of why component 4 (“climate change adaptation and mitigation”) is included into this CRP rather in the CRP on Climate Change. The proponents argue that international negotiations on forests and climate change are more advanced than on agriculture and climate change. Integrating forestry with agriculture at this juncture is premature and would slow things down for forestry without gaining momentum for agriculture. Furthermore, the partnerships needed for forests and climate change are different from those needed for agriculture and climate change. The CB is well aware of the intensive consultations between the proponents of these two CRPs and is confident that they will reinforce each other and will be implemented in order to achieve the desired objectives and impacts on the ground.

Concerning **the delivery focus and plausibility of impact**, the proposal does a very good job of evaluating and describing the potential impact pathways for each project components.

With reference to the **quality of science**, the CB requested the proponents to describe further the research approaches and methods under discussion for each component, and identify milestones along the way to the impacts already identified. It was also requested to strengthen the role of the sentinel landscapes, including through the description of the criteria that will be or could be used to select these sites. The revised version responded to this request by providing sufficient and convincing details. The quality of the science underlining this new version is sound.

The initial proposal already provided a good list of the potential partners to be involved in the program and a convincing partnership strategy. However, in order to improve the **quality of research and development partners and partnership management**, the CB requested a clarification of the division of labour among the CGIAR centres and between them and their partners, including the private sector as well as partnerships with entities that specialize in gender research and gender outreach. In their response, a description of the relative responsibilities of all different partners has been provided to the satisfaction of the CB.

The new version provides a detailed section on the gender component of this CRP and identifies the budget line they will dedicate to research on gender issues as per a recommendation of the gender scoping study commissioned by the CB. In line with the decision taken by the CB in Hyderabad, gender issues will have to be revisited and finalized in all CRPs in accordance to the guidelines provided in that study within the next six months.

In relation to the **appropriateness and efficiency of CRP management**, the structure proposed is simple and lean, and follows the principles suggested by the CB (simplicity, one lead centre, a management committee with balanced representation, and an independent scientific advice). The CB welcomes the cooperation achieved among the CGIAR



participating Centres in the development of the management structure of this CRP, which is of key importance in the reform process.

Regarding the **accountability and financial soundness, and efficiency of governance**, the CB reacted to the first submission of this CRP by requesting the provision of more details on the budget, and the criteria for allocating the overall budget to the different CGIAR partners and their external partners. The CB considers that the answers provided on this revised version are fully satisfactory. This is the first proposal that has developed criteria for allocating funds to the different partners. The budget includes “business as usual” and “what it takes” scenarios. The “what it takes” highlights the needs for additional funding in order to go beyond “business as usual”.

The CB would like to highlight that at the request of the two major proponents CIFOR and ICRAF, it took a decision regarding the lead center for this CRP. The CB found that both Centers met the criteria for CRP leadership and were credible and legitimate contenders for leading CRP 6. The CB decided however that CIFOR was the most suitable centre to take the responsibility to lead CRP 6 in light of a number of relevant criteria agreed by the Centers.

The CB appreciates the overall quality of this proposal which is very well written, systematic in its approach to different issues, clear and convincing. The CB values the significant effort of the proponents in the elaboration of this CRP. This is the first proposal which is evaluated by the CB after its approval of the SRF. We are pleased to highlight that this CRP aligns very well with the guidelines and provisions of this document.

In submitting this proposal for the approval of the Fund Council, the CB would like to stress the importance and relevance of this CRP in the current CGIAR reform process. We consider that “Forest and Trees” has adequately responded to the comments and suggestions from the CB as well as from external reviewers. It fulfils the common criteria developed by the CB and the ISPC, and as such, is a comprehensive and strategic work programme to address the CGIAR vision. We consider furthermore that this initiative is a timely response to global concerns, as reflected in the UN designation of 2011 as the International Year of Forests, and more recently evident in the evolving new strategy (2010–2014) of the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO).

With my best regards on behalf of the CGIAR Consortium Board,

Carlos Pérez del Castillo