

Comments on CRP3.7 proposal: More Meat, Milk and Fish by and for the Poor

FC Member	Comments
Australia	<p>General Comments:</p> <p>CRP 3.7 responds well to the first of the three agreed strategic objectives of the reformed CGIAR, namely: “Food for People: Create and accelerate sustainable increases in the productivity and production of healthy food by and for the poor.” However there is a real risk that the benefits of productivity and other improvements along the chains will in fact not be captured by poor consumers and producers but by “middle people”.</p> <p>A major share of the resources will be on the technology development theme, which is appropriate. As this aspect will often of necessity involve private sector partners, location-specificity and IPR issues can impede scaling up and hence the generation of IPGs.</p> <p>Expected outcomes and impacts are mostly described in generic terms without verifiable indicators and are limited to the selected VC development sites. There is an ambitious M & E program planned that will apparently measure the effects on productivity, incomes, nutrition, and natural resource management using counterfactual controls. Few details are provided as to how this will be implemented and it will be costly.</p> <p>The action research component of the program entails joining in development interventions by other agencies at selected VC sites, essentially as their M & E partner to assess what works and what does not and identifying strategic research issues that arise. This is the primary point of departure of the CRP with previous approaches to livestock and fish R & D. Research theme 3 on targeting, gender, and impact will link learning from the VC sites to enhance impact by anticipating failures and redesigning interventions accordingly. While this is rightly seen by the proponents as part of a results-orientation for the CGIAR, it seems this will only be at the level of the particular development interventions chosen at particular VC sites. Whether and how they can be scaled up or generalized without the same level of M & E input as at the selected VC sites remains moot. Indeed the role that CRP 3.7 has envisaged seems more like a VC agri-business consultancy, with a particular focus on the poor. How likely it is that the private sectors involved in the various VC will subscribe to this poverty agenda is moot, especially when they are investing private capital in the VC.</p> <p>The CRP will have a strong culture of continuous learning, communications (within and without the program), gender mainstreaming, participatory M & E and impact assessment. The communications, advocacy, data and knowledge management principles seem overly ambitious and all things to all stakeholders. There will be a real risk of excessive interactions at the expense of actions, with attendant consequences for both scalable impact and its attribution/responsibility.</p> <p>Governance and management of the CRP seems top heavy, although surprisingly</p>

program management and coordination represent only 5-6% of the budget. This is in contrast with CRP 1.3 at 25%. The FC needs to examine this issue once all CRP proposals are submitted to ensure that there is consistency and validity.

The research agendas at the selected VC sites require further articulation with partners, especially for the pig systems. In view of the novelty of the VC concepts and the ambitious nature of the program, it would be prudent for this CRP to hasten slowly and choose a few VC in a pilot phase of 3-4 years. This would enable a test of the viability of the conceptual framework and the likelihood of success of the VC approach, not only locally but importantly for the CGIAR more broadly in an IPG context.

In summary ACIAR is supportive of this CRP and acknowledges the extent of stakeholder consultation that has gone into the design process together with the tight focus on many of the key issues. The selection of each of the nine value chains subject to specific comments below (and noting that some are at very different stages of development) is well explained. Given the focus on relatively short value chains the CRP has integrated gender and equity principles into the research components.

We would suggest that the new value chain tools and new approaches to value chain innovation should be considered important outputs of the CRP, and should be an important focus of M&E. The CRP aims to enable spillovers into other chains within countries and regions, but we suggest consideration be given to managing spillovers for years four and five.

It is noted that the lack of activity focus on impacts of food supply on human health in the M&E context has been or will be picked up in CRP 4.

Specific Comments:

- The rationale for selecting VC and small scale mixed production systems as the foci for the program is well articulated and convincing. The poor buy their meagre amounts of meat, milk and fish (MMF) mostly from traditional informal markets, which offer lower prices and quality than formal intensive animal production and marketing systems. Informal markets also source from smaller scale mixed production systems. "...by focussing on pro-poor productivity improvements both in small-scale production and informal market systems, our hypothesis is that we will increase the availability, accessibility and affordability of animal source foods for the poor." (p.7). While it is laudable to see the research based upon testing such an overarching hypothesis, the essential question is: what are the prospects of the hypothesis being accepted? By studying and potentially intervening along many elements of often complex and rudimentary value chains, there are many risks that will confront the program. Not the least of these is to what extent the benefits of productivity and other improvements along the chains will in fact be captured by poor consumers and producers rather than "middle people". The proposal makes a lot of assertions about this but it will be important to make this one of the major aspects of the research. Having said this, there is a candid assessment of these and other risks in the success of the program on pp.93-94 and Table 3.4, which is refreshing.
- The gender aspects of the third research theme (pp.10, 49) are much more

	<p>realistic and appropriate than the radical transformative gender approach proposed in CRP 1.3 on aquatic agricultural systems. CRP 3.7 proposes a positive engagement with gender issues in a VC framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are both adaptive and strategic research agendas proposed, although the major emphasis seems to be on the former, which may limit the possibilities for IPGs. Reliance will be placed on cross-site learning using the 10 selected VC to distil IPGs, which seems appropriate though somewhat problematic. • It is good to see a major emphasis on the technology development research theme, which will focus on productivity gains and receive about half of the resources (p.20). How location-specific the resulting technology options will be is moot however. The decision not to become involved directly in post-harvest processing technology development would seem wise as this is rightly a comparative advantage of the private sector, as the proposal recognizes. The proposal suggests the possibility of using competitive grants to the private sector/NARS for such innovations should they represent a constraint to VC improvement (p.21). Again issues of location-specificity arise, as well as intellectual property rights. • The health research agenda will include vaccines (p.24), which ILRI has been researching for decades, with limited success. With the long time horizons and IPR issues involved, more justification for this component is required, especially how the focus on VC will change the prospects in future. • The breeding and genetics program component (pp.20-35) seems new and appropriate, although perhaps more so for fish than livestock. The former presumably have shorter generation intervals and the availability of hatcheries can facilitate the multiplication and distribution of improved progeny, which is borne out by impact studies cited by the proponents showing high benefit/cost ratios for fish genetics. It is also encouraging that there will be a coordinated approach to animal breeding and genetics among ILRI, ICARDA and WorldFish to exploit complementarities, one of the aims of the reforms. • The activities, outputs and partners proposed in the components of the research themes are well described, but the outcomes and impacts are mostly in the form of generic indicators that lack verifiability (Tables 2.10, 2.11 and 2.15). Indeed a comprehensive and ambitious M&E program is described later (pp.64-65), including indicators, baselines, outcome mapping etc., that will apparently measure the effects on productivity, incomes, nutrition, and natural resource management using counterfactual controls. Few details are provided as to how this will be implemented. It will require considerable resources and intellectual ingenuity if the SSA CP is any guide. In particular, it is not clear how it is proposed to separate the effects of the development interventions per se, from the added value of the CRP 3.7 inputs in the counterfactual controls. This deserves much more consideration, as it is at the heart of testing the overarching hypothesis of the CRP. • At VC sites the program will join in development interventions by other agencies, essentially as their M&E partner to assess what works and what does not and identifying strategic research issues that arise (pp.52-58). This is the primary point of departure of the CRP with previous approaches to livestock and fish R&D, which proponents maintain have not been successful, as
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described on pp. 7-10. They expect testing this proof of concept will take 4-6 years. Research theme 3 on targeting, gender, and impact will link learning from the VC sites to enhance impact by anticipating failures and redesigning interventions accordingly. This is also expected to allow a more explicit gender focus in priority setting, research design, implementation, M&E and impact assessment. "Monitoring outcomes and impact is an essential part of research process and re-design, for good science and impact, not just for accountability." (p.56). While this is rightly seen by the proponents as part of a results-orientation for the CGIAR, it seems this will only be at the level of the particular development interventions chosen at particular VC sites. Whether and how they can be scaled up or generalized without the same level of M&E input as at the selected VC sites remains moot. The proposal is not clear about this aspect and to what extent it has responsibility to ensure it. For example the Vietnam program will only document impacts at VC sites with scaling up and out to come later (pp.204→). Maybe the foreshadowed operational plan will provide the necessary detail on measurable and impacts at scale that will be expected in six years, but this requires monitoring (p. 72).

- Gender activities will comprise analysis and mainstreaming. The former entails research to understand women's roles in VC, feed sector etc. The latter involves development of methods and strategies to address gender in R&D of VC, capacity development and testing/evaluation of innovations from a gender perspective. ACIAR supports this approach.
- Governance and management of the CRP seems top heavy with a Program Planning and Management Committee, Science and Partnership Advisory Committee, Program Governance Committee and a Science and Partnership Forum (pp.71-74). There also will be a Development Manager to build and develop partnerships with the private sector.
- The CRP will have a strong culture of continuous learning, communications (within and without the program) gender mainstreaming, participatory M&E and impact assessment (p.72). The communications, advocacy, data and knowledge management principles seem overly ambitious and all things to all stakeholders (pp.80-90). There will be a real risk of excessive interactions at the expense of actions, with attendant consequences for both impact and its attribution/responsibility. Indeed, there is a parallel with McLuhan's theme that "the media is the message". In this program it seems one is going further in suggesting that the process is the panacea. But maybe this is being disingenuous?
- There is an intention to link to a number of other CRPs (pp.86-92, Table 3.3) but there is little detail or evidence of commitment at this stage. Hence it appears there is a lot more to be done before there is a coherent CGIAR program evident.
- Program coordination and management is scheduled to be 5-6% of the budget, which contrasts with the figure of 25% for CRP 1.3. The FC needs to examine this issue once all CRP proposals are submitted to ensure that there is consistency and validity. The centers' overheads of 17-20% in CRP 3.7 are just a little higher than in CRP 1.3 of 14%.
- The rationales provided for the selection of commodities (pp.12→), countries

FAO	<p>and VC (pp.104→) are persuasive and the proponents are to be commended. The criteria are well justified and the evidence in support is convincing. There has been an attempt to quantify expected outcomes in terms of added production and consumption but not in a verifiable form. Most expected outcomes are generic in nature e.g. “increased knowledge”, “services accessible”, “reduced mortality”, “increased off take”, “higher prices and incomes”, “increased margins for smallholders in VC” etc.(p.141). Certainly the latter is at the heart of the hypothesis to be tested in the program but there is little confidence that it will be possible to validate this based on the current proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complementarity of CRP 3.7 and CRP 1.3 is established on p. 105. The latter focuses on underdeveloped aquatic agricultural systems whereas 3.7 focuses on aquaculture per se in formative systems (Uganda) and maturing/evolving ones (Egypt). • The researchable issues and scope for interventions to relieve constraints are well articulated in tables like 4.3 etc. (e.g. brood stock, hatchery performance, transport mortality, poor seed markets, poor feedstuffs and markets etc.). However, for a research program like CRP 3.7 to be able to identify the most limiting constraints from the perspective of women and poor consumers and producers seems heroic at best. Additionally, how these relate to already identified interventions by development partners requires clarification. Indeed the role that CRP 3.7 has envisaged seems more like an agri-business consultancy with a particular focus on the poor. How likely it is that the private sectors involved in the various VC will subscribe to this poverty agenda is moot, especially when they are investing private capital in the VC. • Most of the descriptions of the VC in part 4 suggest that there is a need for more time to flesh out with partners the research agendas in the selected VC. This is especially the case for the VC for pigs in Tanzania and Vietnam. Hence it would be prudent for this CRP to hasten slowly and choose a few VC in a pilot phase of 3-4 years to test the viability of the conceptual framework and the likelihood of success of the VC approach, not only locally but importantly for the CGIAR more broadly in an IPG context. • In an action research program such as this embedded within development projects, it is acknowledged that development investments will be required to realize the benefits of VC innovations at the selected VC development sites. How will this be achieved and importantly how will it be funded? If it is fully subsidized by the development partners, how replicable and sustainable will this be in a commercial environment with no subsidies? If it is not, how are private VC actors to be convinced to experiment? <p>FAO commends the well written proposal for CRP 3.7. More meat, milk and fish focused on five system specific animal source food value chains across 10 countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is anticipated that the focus on five value chains, and inclusion of the various regions and countries allow comparisons, cross-system learning and application of results beyond the selected countries and regions.</p> <p>FAO noted as one deficiency very weak links with other development partners’, e.g.</p>
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FAO's development work in the areas of the proposal that should be addressed when revising the proposal.

Specific comments are provided to the component on fish production systems in Africa by the FAO Fishery Department

The concept – apparently fish produced and consumed by the poor – is obviously appealing, but perhaps not as easy as the reader of the proposal would be led to believe. FAO experiences in Africa certainly show that fish farming as a business is not for the poorest of the poor, since resources are required. Low-resource non-commercial fishponds have been around for decades with an acknowledged mediocre impact, but this is not about repeating this experience. “Small-scale” aquaculture enterprises are not the equivalent of “poor”.

Of the three core themes – production technologies, value chains [marketing] and gender – the latter two are indeed areas where there is considerable need and there are definitely gaps.

On the production technology side, this theme seemingly talks more about a) genetics and b) feeds.

- a. Of the genetics research questions listed on pages 32/33, No's 2, 5,6, 7 and 9 relate to FAO's Fishery Department work. It is, however a bit disconcerting to note (pg 34) that it is stated:

The escapees may interbreed with the wild population with unknown but likely undesirable consequences. The conduct of systematic environmental risk analyses can be of great value for the identification and subsequent management of the risks associated with development, introduction and dissemination of genetically improved fish strains in a given region.

This seems to be articulating a foregone conclusion that there will be negative, perhaps significantly negative impacts. Whilst risk assessment is critical and will help identify these impacts, in and of itself it will not mitigate them. Hence, in one scenario at least, we have the situation where these negativities could well offset the advantages of a breeding program.

- b. On the feed part, imbedded in the discussion seems to be the position that feed prices are high [too high] in areas where crop yields are low – increase overall agricultural productivity and lower feed costs. Of course. The feed issue in the Region is at this juncture: how to lower costs? We have moved from on-farm recycling and use of by-products to a point where most countries are relying on commercially prepared feeds. Whilst some research may well be directed to least-cost formulations and component substitutions, there are now a growing number of feed suppliers – the real question is cost. It is also a bit disconcerting to note (pg 41) the statement: In pond aquaculture, where feeding response is not always easy to assess. In FAO's experience, if fish have a good feeding response, it is easy to assess.

We are surprised that although FAO is cited as a partner on page 74, there is no real

<p>World Bank-ARD</p>	<p>mention of FAO’s work related to fish production in Africa – the Special Program for Aquaculture Development in Africa (SPADA), the Tilapia Volta Project (TIVO), the Aquaculture Network for Africa (ANAF) and the on-going joint breeding work in Ghana.</p> <p>With regard to the concentration of farm-level work in Uganda, the only sub-Saharan country cited for aquaculture, FAO has recent and on-going work in Uganda. FAO has assisted with the National Aquaculture Strategy and is still involved in the finalization of this product. Uganda is also an ANAF country. FAO’s earlier Technical Cooperation Program work focused on seed issues and would therefore be a suitable partner for work in this area.</p> <p>In regard to the breeding program, we were surprised about the choice of Uganda given the risk issues relating to bio-diversity, bio-conservation, bio-safety and bio-security. From a regional perspective it seems the logical decision would have been to see the research work in Ghana through to fruition where essential precedents and analyses could be done in the one country with [now] existing quarantine and bio-secure facilities. With WorldFish, FAO publically stated that the work in the Volta is the pioneering work for the Region. The questions are serious and the answers far-reaching. The subject and operational environments are complex. FAO and WorldFish should continue working as a team where both organizations have a solid base and nearly three years of experiences, and it is therefore suggested to reconsider the choice of the country for the breeding program and to build meaningful bridges to the above mentioned FAO programs.</p> <p>Overall Assessment: The program seeks to increase access of poor consumers to milk, meat and fish and to improve the livelihood of poor producers, through a program focused on a limited number (9) of livestock and fish value chains, combining cutting edge science with applied development activities. The proposal is concise and well written. The proposal addresses scientific breakthroughs, such as the use of novel genomic approaches to leapfrog bottlenecks in provision of adapted animal types and the use of spatial, landscape and household analysis for livestock value chains. The CRP includes a focused and well-reasoned partnership strategy (i.e., strategic program partners and value chain partners). The management structure is thought through but requires some clarifications for committees’ responsibilities and their relationship. We support the ISPC review for CRP 3.7.</p> <p>Quality Enhancement We think the CRP3.7 would be strengthened if the following areas were improved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposal gives a multitude of possible outcomes but only one is quantified (improved food-feed varieties). A more detailed quantitative description of key expected outputs and outcomes is recommended. 2. The program management structure is appropriate but the relationship, roles and accountabilities for committees can be clarified. For example, Program Governance Committee, and a Science and Partnership Forum were mentioned in CRP but they were not defined. 3. The proposal should include additional research in trade-offs, particularly to
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	<p>include environmental issues. Livestock is in the middle of a global discussion regarding its effect on the environment, especially GHG emissions. While some assessments of the carbon footprints are discussed, additional information is needed on how could this be tackled and addressed in the proposed value chains and globally.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. The balance between the technology development (upstream) and technology application (downstream) components (i.e., value chain development and targeting, gender and impact) needs further review. In the CRP, about 50% of budget is allocated to technology development, which seems low for a program expected to produce top class science.5. The global public good character needs to be sharpened. By applying a holistic research/development approach in a small number of value chains, the program runs the risk of getting too heavily involved in location specific issues, while neglecting the generation of global public goods. They should be better identified and their generation enhanced.6. The CRP should include an integrated strategy for resource mobilization that is a part of program-level management. <p>Recommendation: Approval without condition.</p>
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