

Background Resource: ISPC and Funder Assessments of Resubmitted Flagship Proposals

Purpose

This document sets out the following as a Background Resources to inform the System Council's discussions on the eligibility for W1/2 funding of 5 flagships which were approved at SC2 for inclusion in the 2017-2022 CGIAR Portfolio, but were determined as not eligible for W1&2 funding for 2018. The following elements are included in this Resource:

Item	Description	Pages
1	A covering letter from the Chair of the ISPC dated 23 October 2017, outlining the review process. <i>(Note: The letter also describes the review process for the GLDC proposal; this will form part of discussions at Agenda Item 3 and the assessment of this is therefore not provided in this resource).</i>	2-3
2	Assessment of FISH, Flagship 2 (Small Scale Fisheries)	4-7
3	Assessment of FTA, Flagship 2 (Trees for smallholder livelihoods)	8-11
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Action Requested

These materials are provided for background information only.

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23 October 2017

Elwyn Grainger-Jones
Executive Director,
CGIAR System Organization

Dear Elwyn

SC5: COLLATED (ISPC & DONOR) ASSESSMENTS OF RESUBMITTED GLDC AND 5 FPs

To facilitate the System Council review process for the resubmitted FPs and the GLDC CRP, I am sending you a pdf for each resubmission which includes both the ISPC assessments and (where available) the reviews by representatives of donor agencies nominated by SIMEC. For GLDC we received reviews from 4 donor representatives, while for the FPs we received reviews from 1 donor each for FTA, Livestock FP3 and Livestock FP5, but no donor reviews for Fish FP2 and WLE FP5.

The assessments have not changed since we submitted them on September 20th (through you) to the SMB. At the SMB meeting there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the rationale underlying our reviews and hence I am providing more detail in this cover letter to remind SC members of the rationale we used during 2016

The rationale for ISPC assessments at FP level: Our assessments for both the full CRP and the 5 FPs were conducted according to the same criteria as we used one year ago (as published in the Consortium “*Final Guidance for Full Proposals*”). The ISPC collectively assigned each FP a rating of ‘Strong’, ‘Moderate’ or ‘Weak’ to draw distinctions between the strengths of the different proposals, with respect to our interpretation of SC priorities for W1/2 funding. Each FP had already secured W3/bilateral funding indicating that that research has met donor criteria for bilateral funding: we considered that we were being asked to comment on the merits of the different proposal’s potential for delivery of international public goods. We based our assessment of this on our assessments of the individual criteria: strategic relevance and theory of change; scientific quality and comparative advantage. At SC3, funding decisions only differentiated between a ranking of “weak” vs “strong and moderate” reached after Council discussion of both the ISPC and FEWG assessments (although later minor funding adjustments were made using ISPC criteria of “moderate”). The SC took the decision not to award W1/2 funding to 5 of the FPs - ISPC only gave advice on relative strengths not on whether funding should be withheld.

2017 FP assessments: In 2016, four of the resubmitted FPs were assessed as ‘Weak’ by the ISPC and of these, Livestock FP5 and FTA have improved considerably and are now rated as ‘Strong’. WLE FP5 has also been strengthened but our reservations leave its rating as ‘Moderate’. Livestock FP3 remains with a ‘Weak’ rating from ISPC, although we do recognize that the proposal has been strengthened in some aspects. Fish FP2 was rated as ‘Strong’ by the ISPC in 2016 and has retained that rating. The only significant divergence between ISPC and donor rating this year is for FP3 and we assume that as in 2016, the decision on funding should take both reviews into account.

GLDC: In the case of the assessment of the resubmitted GLDC proposal, the ISPC review process drew on insights from 2 external reviewers, with the process followed, including the criteria used, being the

same as for our assessments of the 11 CRPs which were approved for funding in 2016. The rating at CRP level (agreed by the ISPC as a whole) was a B+. As defined below this reflects “*a sound research proposal...*” And places it in the same category as awarded to Fish, Livestock and FTA CRPs in 2016.

We used the same rationale as outlined above for the resubmitted FPs, for rating the GLDC FPs. One Flagship (FP 2) was rated as “Weak”, 3 (FPs 1, 3 and 5) were rated as “Moderate” and 1 (FP 4) was rated as “Strong”. ...At FP level the donor reviews did not include explicit scores. The narratives of the donor reviews submitted noted that FP2 has a high potential for impact but one raised concerns around organizational buy-in from implementing partners. The comparative advantage of CGIAR in this area was also raised as a concern, suggesting the equivalent of a moderate rating for this FP.

Kind regards



Margaret Gill
Chair of the ISPC

Definitions of ISPC CRP level assessments

A+: Outstanding - of the highest quality, at the forefront of research in the field (fully evolved, exceeds expectations; recommended unconditionally).

A: Excellent – high quality research and a strongly compelling proposal that is at an advanced stage of evolution as a CRP, with strong leadership which can be relied on to continue making improvements.

A-: Very good – a sound and compelling proposal displaying high quality research and drawing on established areas of strength, which could benefit from a more forward-looking vision.

B+: Good – a sound research proposal but one which is largely framed by ‘business as usual’ and is deficient in some key aspects of a CRP that can contribute to System-wide SLOs.

B: Fair – Elements of a sound proposal but has one or more serious flaws rendering it uncompetitive; not recommended without significant change.

C: Unsatisfactory – Does not make an effective case for the significance or quality of the proposed research.

ISPC Assessment of Flagship 2 (Small Scale Fisheries) of the CGIAR Research Program on Fish Agri-Food Systems (2017-2022)

1. Summary

FP2 FISH aims to sustain and increase the contribution of Small Scale Fisheries to poverty reduction and food and nutrition security. In its September 2016 assessment, the ISPC rated FP2 as a “strong”; however, there were three important caveats: (i) there was weak articulation of the understanding of the complexity of achieving systemic change; (ii) there was little acknowledgement that the evidence base in this area of research is evolving rapidly (and hence a need to define comparative advantage); and (iii) the proposed strategy to scale up results was not convincing.

The ISPC’s rating of the FP’s resubmission is still strong. It sits well both within the CRP as a whole and with regard to the portfolio of CRP clusters. The goal of promoting and sustaining small-scale fisheries deserves to be part of the CGIAR’s agenda. The FP makes a strong case that other CRPs, ‘need’ complementary fisheries research in a number of key ecologies to address SLOs that are linked to climate change, sustainable ocean management, and human nutrition. In addition, the revised FP document demonstrates a very good understanding of the challenges involved in system-wide transformation as well as some of the avenues of thinking needed to overcome them.

The re-submission provides more concrete evidence of past success, includes reference to independent peer reviewed outputs, and adds new skills and expertise to the FP team. Although it’s assumed that the nature and scope of this involvement will be clarified further in the FPs annual reports, the experience of the nominated leader, provides additional strength to the proposal.

The FP’s body of work relates to access rights, policies and regulations, and fisheries governance. While this focus can certainly be justified in terms of political economy, and is supported by prevailing views in the published literature, the proposal still lacks a convincing case on the potential for translation of science into actual policy changes. Thus, while the ToC laid out for this FP2 is plausible, it remains to be seen if it is feasible. Testing, if, and how, FP2 can measurably shift policy and governance to achieve positive outcomes in SSF through a variety of possible change mechanisms at scale, rather than through a narrow focus on influencing governments and donors with evidence from community-level studies, would add to the FP’s business model.

This re-submission is an improvement over the original. It does, however, not deal comprehensively with all caveats made on the earlier submission, and thus only partially improves the confidence in a research program that can generate measurable results at large scale. The ISPC is, however, confident that the experienced FP leadership will be able to apply themselves to the tasks of prioritizing a convincing research-based agenda that will support SSF transformation within the proposed budget and timeframe. An early articulation of a coherent science agenda underpinning desired institutional and policy change to be provided in the FPs first annual report would thus be most helpful.

2. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments on the FP

Previous ISPC comments (14 Sep 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed	ISPC assessment
<p>1. Weak articulation of the complexity involved in achieving systemic change</p>	<p>FP2 responds to the challenges of translating the policy intentions of the SDGs, the FAO SSF guidelines and the shift in private sector investor priorities toward social objectives, food and nutrition security by applying interdisciplinary research necessary to develop the management, technology and governance innovations required to translate these commitments into outcomes.</p> <p>Revisions to the impact pathways and ToC aim to articulate more clearly how capacity to facilitate systemic change is built into FP2 with investment in four change mechanisms targeted at (i) local adoption of technologies and management approaches; (ii) equitable value chain development; (iii) public sector policy and institutional change; and (iv) policy and priorities of civil society and development agencies.</p> <p>Change mechanisms rely on a partnership strategy that is “focused on national, regional and cross-regional influence; we invest in these in conjunction with global partners with proven convening power and policy influence to accelerate impact at scale.”</p> <p>In addition, revisions articulate the links between developing a robust understanding of the place of SSF in regional fish agri-food systems and identifying opportunities to influence systemic change. This draws upon foundational research in clusters 1 and 2 that relate to marine and freshwater production systems and their broader policy and economic context.</p>	<p>The FP2 revision clearly lays out the scope and scale of the challenges and complexity ahead in achieving governance and large-scale policy change. The detail on the actual streams of science that will be pursued in this respect is, however, light. While there is significant attention in the document to the broad domains of change needed at macro level, further detail on how this links to the research questions under FP2 would further strengthen the proposal.</p> <p>Cluster 1 and 2 appear to focus on different aspects of research of place-based FISH-relevant livelihood and productivity increases. The questions relate to how the lessons learned from these localized activities will be translated into policy influence to accelerate impact at scale. A number of the assumptions in Table 2.4 on how research outputs lead to changes at various scales (from community to region), whilst undoubtedly desirable, might be difficult to realise.</p> <p>A clearer alignment of cluster 1 and 2 activities with the framing and approaches of Cluster 3 would have further strengthened the proposal.</p>
<p>2. Evidence base in this area of research is evolving rapidly</p>	<p>FP2 revision states that success in achieving early milestones of the FISH CRP in 2017 has led to increased organizational and researcher buy-in from partners,</p>	<p>Although it is clear that much of the work proposed falls into the category of ‘implementation science’, additional clarity on how FP2 engages with, and complements other bodies of work on</p>

	<p>growing integration with other CRPs and improved research linkages across the CRP. In its revisions to the Staffing of management team and flagship, FP2 presents the team of lead researchers that “are committed to the delivery of FP2; a strategic growth that enhances our continuing position at the frontier of SSF research, policy and practice. “</p> <p>The research track record of FP2 research leaders is said to demonstrate that the team assembled to deliver FP2 keeps abreast of, and makes substantial contribution to this growing evidence base. In addition, FP2 aims to convene regular learning events, as part of its results based management approach, enabling FP2 (and FISH) research, milestones and the ToC to respond efficiently to newly emerging evidence and opportunities for systemic change.</p>	<p>fisheries biology, ecology, economics, and policy would have further strengthened the proposal. There was no introduction and background on the management experience of the proposed new FP leadership in any of the revised FP documents or the letter accompanying the FP submission. This was rectified, however, following a specific question by the ISPC, which led to the appropriate information being provided on this.</p>
<p>3. Strategy to scale results up and out</p>	<p>The FP2 revised scaling strategies have been selected due to the strength of evidence emerging in 2017 that demonstrate tracking on impact pathways towards outcome targets. The afore mentioned change mechanisms further aim to ensure research is designed, developed, disseminated and shared to ensure research outcomes and development outcomes. These change mechanisms are particularly reliant on working in conjunction with partners focused on national, regional and cross-regional influence that will accelerate outcomes at scale, and rely on national and regional partnerships that have been built through preceding in-country engagements of implementing partners.</p> <p>Further revisions to the partnership strategy also aim to reflect that, in addition to work with partners focused on national and regional scales, FISH also works with organizations with convening power that span regions. Moreover, the revisions aim to more clearly articulate the comparative advantage of the managing partners - a coalition</p>	<p>Testing, if, and how FP2 can measurably shift policy and governance to achieve positive outcomes in SSF through a variety of possible change mechanisms, rather than through a sole focus on influencing governments and donors with evidence from community-level studies, might have added further strength to the FP’s research logic.</p>

	that is said to be “uniquely positioned for impact at scale. “	
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3. Characterization of the Flagship

Main strengths	Weaknesses
Understanding of the complexity of achieving systemic change	Ambiguity on links between FP2 research activities and governance change at different levels
Breadth of SSF science leaders and practitioners associated with the FP	
Degree of alignment with national and regional priorities and initiatives	Research-to-impact assumptions might be difficult to realise
Articulation of the proposed learning-based approach to FP management	

NOTE: No review was received from a representative of a donor agency for this FP resubmission

Assessment of Flagship 2 (Trees for smallholder livelihoods) of the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees, and Agroforestry (2017-2022)

1. Summary

Flagship 2 (trees for smallholder livelihoods) of the Forests, Trees and Agroforestry CRP aims to offer options for improved food security and livelihood outcomes through improvements in the management of: natural resources; timber and non-timber forest product production; tree-crop systems; pastures; and through the diversification of production systems. In its September 2016 assessment, the ISPC rated FP2 as weak. There was an overemphasis of the importance of trees in smallholder livelihoods, unrealistic assumptions of the impact of the FP's work, and a weak theory of change. In addition, the coherence of the production systems selected for inclusion was questioned.

The ISPC's rating of this FP's resubmission is strong. FP2 has been mostly successful in addressing the ISPC's September 2016 assessment comments. Of the three weaknesses the ISPC identified in the September 2016 resubmission, two have been adequately addressed. The FP theory of change (TOC) carefully considers the spheres of control, interest and influence and, when compared to the previous versions of the proposal, there is evidence of considerable reconceptualization and improved articulation for why and how the FP will succeed. A significant effort has been made to compile the evidence for why forests, trees, and agroforestry matter for smallholder livelihoods both directly and indirectly. The FP-level targets have not been scaled down but, in response to ISPC concerns that the magnitudes were unrealistic, FP2 proponents have rephrased the targets in terms of the number of people to be "reached" by the program. There is evidence of improved leadership and realistic assessment of challenges in successfully implementing the proposed activities.

The third weakness raised by ISPC of the 2016 proposal – that "the coherence of the set of different production systems selected for research remains unclear" – is still an issue in the current proposal as this is largely a legacy of large bilateral projects and a likely consequence of the low shares of W1/2 funding available.

A final cautionary note is the lack of examples of well-documented impacts at scale, despite the diligence of the proponents in trying to identify these. In mitigation, it should be noted that our understanding of the limitations and challenges associated with attempting to improve livelihoods through trees is, to a significant extent, shaped by scientists in the FTA CRP.

2. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments on the FP

Previous ISPC comments (Sep 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed	ISPC assessment
The mismatch between evidence of documented historical impacts, and expected future impacts, is stark. Even though targets are overly optimistic for many CRPs, FTA is an outlier among all CRPs	Making livelihoods the focal point of the FP, the proponents have provided a compelling narrative, aided by graphics for further explanation. Rather than claiming unrealistic and unsubstantiated benefits, the FP now demonstrates how trees and plantations can add value and make a major,	Table A provides a very good overview of major pathways by which trees and forest resources can improve smallholder livelihoods. This includes examples of strong science partnerships as well as case-study based evidence of public-private partnerships, such as FTA's leadership in the tree-crop value chain program of the African Development Bank (TAAT). Amongst others, FTA is also showing leadership in the food security / land productivity area in East Africa (Trees4FoodSecurity, T4FS). They also provide a

<p>regarding targets that lack credibility, particularly the one relating to the number of farmers likely to be lifted out of poverty. Sections of the proposal which refer to targets or provide justification for the figures quoted need to be rewritten. The revised CRP should have a stronger rationale for targets, including past evidence, especially for SLO 1.</p>	<p>additional contribution on a path to intensification.</p> <p>Aspects such as fodder, soil fertility, nutrient and water cycling, resource use efficiencies and the value of diversification are used to demonstrate how yield gaps of staple food and cash crops can be closed via targeted integration.</p> <p>Links to SLOs, sub-IDOs (particularly Table B) and SDGs are now clearly outlined and targets are much clearer. The explicit acknowledgement of targets as cumulative numbers is helpful.</p>	<p>strong link to nutrition by demonstrating a link between the right amount of tree cover and avoiding micronutrient deficiencies in many rural and smallholder communities throughout Africa. Although not explicitly mentioned, this work also addresses the huge concerns of stunting in children. The proposed FP mitigates against this risk.</p> <p>In stepping back from their targets, without actually changing them in a substantive way, the FP now uses the concept of people “reached” to describe the link between the program and livelihood outcomes. This is a very limited and modest measure of the potential for the program to generate outcomes. Some kind of indicator of adoption or uptake of research outputs would be much preferred – a measure in which the users must do something proactive in order for it to count towards an outcome.</p> <p>The numbers of people to be reached by the FP remains quite high at 100 million in 20 million households (to take the most conservative interpretation of table 1). Despite the greater conceptual clarity offered by the revised version, there is still concern about the lack of well-documented cases of large-scale, sustained impact to justify the numbers. This concern is ameliorated somewhat by the fact that ICRAF and CIFOR scientists have contributed significantly to our understanding of this gap between ambition and achievement.</p>
<p>Over-emphasis on contribution of trees to smallholder livelihoods</p>	<p>This concern is addressed in comments above and below.</p>	
<p>It is not clear how the research in this FP will generate a broader understanding of diverse contexts, hence raising questions about capacity to deliver proposed targets.</p>	<p>The Theory of Change has been clarified using three interrelated assumptions, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trees can improve livelihoods via higher TFP • smallholders, particularly women, can increase their income and • minority groups can benefit if policies and investments are appropriately geared towards tree establishment <p>Pathways of integration have been clarified. For instance, the time-lag between initial investment in tree crops or timber has been made explicit, including feasible options how this can be addressed via</p>	<p>The ToC narrative has been convincingly revised, including the partners at various scales. Fig. 4 provides an overview of the key stages of co-generation of knowledge that explicitly addresses the spheres of control, influence and interest, ultimately leading to impact.</p> <p>The “options by context” extrapolation framework deserves recognition, not just as a clear strategy for impact but perhaps even more importantly as an explicit way to tackle high contextual heterogeneity. The strategy to generate international public goods (IPGs) through place-based research and systematic planned comparisons may seem common sense, but is coherent and, if implemented well, can set an example for other CRPs. The discussion of IPGs (p. 22) is clear, and there is a realistic assessment of the challenges in realizing them. However, the concerns about evidence and track-record outlined above regarding delivery against targets remain.</p>

	technical and financial innovations.	
The coherence of the set of different production systems selected for research remains unclear.	Table C provides an overview of the current co-located, place-based research portfolio, with an accompanying argument that W1/2 funding is required for integration and value-adding.	Although Table C makes a convincing case for the need for integration – and resourcing such integration – it also shows a potential vulnerability in the portfolio related to the diversity of bilateral funders. Integration across production systems implies a retro-fitting of concepts and analysis plans onto a large, and thinly-spread portfolio (20 different countries are listed in table C) of bilateral projects.

3. Characterization of the Flagship

Main strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust FP theory of change (TOC) carefully considers the spheres of control, interest and influence improved articulation for why and how the FP will succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The targets specified in terms of numbers of people “reached” by the CRP makes it very difficult to understand the potential scale of benefits from the CRP, and is potentially misleading as it conflates people exposed to policy change, with direct and indirect beneficiaries from project interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualization and communication of how science in the clusters of activity can be brought together to support livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coherence of the set of different production systems selected for research remains unclear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options by context framework integrates across the clusters of activities, and can unify perspectives from the different disciplines represented in the FP 	

Review by nominee from Donor Agency

Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA) CRP: Flagship 2, Trees for smallholder livelihoods

One representative from one donor agency reviewed the proposal and his/her scores (on a scale of 0-5) and comments are summarized below.

1. Ratings

Summary of scores for FP Qs 1-4, by Reviewer, as Scores 0-5 and as weighted average % score

Criteria	Reviewer 1
Q1 Potential for impact	5
Q2 Strategic importance, logistical viability and governance	4
Q3 Comparative advantage and cost effectiveness/value for money	5
Q4 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	4
Weighted average% FP2 Q1-4	92%

2. Summary

FP2 received a score of either 4 or 5 on each criterion, and an overall weighted score of 92%. FP2's impact pathway is clear, with evidence of organisational buy-in and good consideration of gender issues. There is strong alignment between the proposed interventions and established diagnoses of challenges/problems. Highly qualified organization are involved, and the institutional arrangements for the FP are considered moderately clear, the proponents have clear comparative advantage, and the research is well-aligned to the unique assets and strengths of the CGIAR. The scale of the budget is extremely difficult to judge. It was not clear whether the actions of FP2 can really be attributed to the proposed result and there are doubts whether the delivery system will produce the proposed results. Carbon finance options are mentioned, but the FP demonstrates limited understanding of its context and complexity, and the sectors political economy may have been underestimated.. Finally, the issue of whether beneficiaries of the outcomes stated are counted only once, or whether the same beneficiaries can be counted several times in the different outcomes, is also not clear.

ISPC Assessment of Flagship-3 (Livestock feeds and forages) of the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock Agri-Food System (2017-2022)

1. Summary

Flagship 3 (feeds and forages) of the Livestock CRP aims to increase livestock productivity and reduce environmental impacts by identifying, testing, and delivering superior feed and forage strategies and options. In its September 2016 assessment, the ISPC rated FP3 as weak on the basis of weak track record of delivery at scale; inadequate articulation of its comparative advantage, particularly in relation to the private sector; and lack of detail on research priorities, science outputs, and timelines.

The ISPC's rating of this FP's resubmission is still weak. The FP-level targets have been adjusted, in response to concerns about exaggerated targets. However, the research program is not convincingly aligned with major opportunities in various contexts (dual purpose crops, delivery and market linkages, etc.) and the associated constraints in the forages and feed sector to deliver impact. In the absence of a track record and *ex-ante* evidence, the assumptions underlying the impact pathway are too optimistic. The candid acknowledgement of this lack of evidence (*ex-ante* as well as *ex-post*) on the uptake of research-related feed and forage innovation, and an intent to address this gap is appreciated. However, the balance of efforts on this issue between FP3 and FP5 CoA1, which seems the logical place to locate foresight activities, is not evident. Moreover, the comparative advantage of the CGIAR *vis-à-vis* the private sector and NARS is not convincingly argued.

2. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments on the FP

Previous ISPC comments (14 Sep 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed	ISPC assessment
1. Weak track record of delivery at scale	<p>The overly optimistic targets acknowledged, and more conservation assumptions on uptake of research outputs and ensuing impact on poverty adopted. Specifically, a 200% spill over effect had been assumed and has been reduced to 50%. One country-level (Pakistan) target was also reduced since there will be limited activities, due to reductions in bilateral funding. Cross-FP effort on foresight and prioritisation will prioritize the improvement of parameters in models that underline these numbers.</p> <p>Acknowledge that evidence on improved forage adoption is scarce. Information is available for LAC (>700k ha adoption of hybrids related to the CRP, and overall estimated on improved forage adoption at 150 mn ha, and 120 mn ha attributable to Brazilian NARS). Proposed targets: 2mn ha by 2022 in LAC, E. Africa and SEA and 600,000 farmers using</p>	<p>At the FP-level targets have been adjusted downward, and there is more clarity on priority countries for research outputs under each CoA. The number of farmers reached and acreage for improved cultivar dissemination, however, has remained the same at the CoA level.</p> <p>Candid acknowledgement of the lack of <i>ex ante</i> as well as <i>ex post</i> evidence on uptake of improved forages is appreciated. It is important to reflect on the reasons for this data / knowledge gap, considering the decades of effort and investments.</p> <p>The emphasis on <i>ex ante</i> assessments (as well as <i>ex post</i>) is appropriate, and using critical assessments of past experience and changing opportunities to revise the theory of change and impact pathways is called for. At the same time, the linkage</p>

	<p>improved forages – this is based on growing interest of private forage and seed sector.</p> <p>Dearth of <i>ex ante</i> assessments is another gap that the FP will address, but existing (even if limited) <i>ex ante</i> assessments indicate huge potential in Africa.</p>	<p>with FP5 and the balance of efforts between FP3 and FP5 is not clear.</p>
<p>2. Comparative advantage vis-a-vis other comparable research and the development of the private sector feed industry is unclear</p>	<p>Sections on ‘rationale and scope’ as well as ‘partnerships’ revised to present arguments on why the CGIAR maintains a clear comparative advantage vis-a-vis the private sector, NARS and other actors, including that a major seed multinational continues to rely on CGIAR for its forage breeding. At the same time, the private sector is a crucial player in dissemination of research outputs – this is highlighted in the rationale and partnership sections as well.</p> <p>Acknowledge that addressing forage and feeds constraints is a delivery issue, and this dimension given priority / prominence in the narrative as well. W1/W2 funds shifted to achieve a better balance between development (CoA 2), targeting (CoA 1), delivery and monitoring uptake (CoA 4).</p>	<p>The increased emphasis on delivery recognizes an acknowledged constraint to new forage/feed solutions having impact. Whether this will enhance the likelihood of success is questionable since the outputs that this FP/CRP focuses on (improved forage varieties) are misaligned with the demand / opportunities for forage and feed solutions in South Asia, South-east Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In many areas of these regions, it would appear that the opportunities are in dual purpose crops.</p> <p>The assertion that seed multinationals rely on CGIAR breeding programs for cultivars is insufficient to make a case for investments – there is a paucity of evidence on whether this pathway would lead to significant positive impacts on the CGIAR SLOs. It also raises the question whether public funds should underwrite commercial R&D efforts.</p> <p>The comparative advantage of this effort <i>vis-à-vis</i> the private sector and NARS partners remains unaddressed. From the evidence on uptake presented, partners such as Embrapa have a stronger track record in forage research and delivery than the CGIAR.</p>
<p>3. Lack of detail on research priorities, science outputs and timelines</p>	<p>Sections on ‘rationale and scope’ and ‘science quality’ reworked to show how past experience has shaped priorities, and identifies existing constraints that can be overcome through this CRP/FP’s research. Similarly, changes to COA section showcases a more focussed research agenda, and explicitly defined priorities and outputs that will be achieved.</p> <p>FP focuses mainly on three sub-IDOs: more efficient use of inputs; closed yield gaps; and technologies that reduce women’s labour and energy expenditure</p>	<p>The clarification and implied shift towards food-feed crops is appreciated. The narrative includes some description of past Livestock and Fish CRP work to generate demand scenarios, and domains for selected crops (e.g. maize, sorghum, and cowpea) and geographies to inform decisions on new full-purpose crop cultivars. But, information on lessons from these analyses and the extent of influence on research plans remains unclear.</p> <p>The balance of efforts between ‘fodder’ and ‘feed’ (a much broader concept) is</p>

	<p>developed/disseminated. Acknowledge that the appropriate research focus is on closing livestock yield gap by delivering better feed material and other interventions that enhance animal productivity. Contribution to other sub-IDs (capacity development, environmental issues) is through collaboration with FP4 (environment) and FP5 (LLAFS).</p> <p>Connections and common work with other CRPs, CGIAR Centers and external partners highlighted, including food-feed crops initiative with AFS-CRPs and commodity Centers, and the Biological Nitrification Inhibition (BNI) consortium.</p>	<p>not evident. Superior forages appear to be the focus, and there may be opportunities in the broader feed sector that are being missed. For instance, improving cost-effectiveness of feed innovation, which may not necessarily be delivered through research. This is applicable to South Asia, Southeast Asia and parts of sub-Saharan Africa where opportunities for improved fodder, as acknowledged, are limited.</p>
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3. Characterization of the Flagship

Main strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Potentially high strategic relevance as animal nutrition is a constraint to productivity increases, especially within the targeted smallholder systems. Key sub-sector in livestock-related GHG emissions, potential for sequestration / mitigation outcomes</p>	<p>Absence of track record as well as <i>ex ante evidence</i> – to support the assumptions underlying the impact pathways</p>
<p>Collaboration across the CGIAR on feeds and forages</p>	<p>Comparative advantage <i>vis-à-vis</i> other comparable research and the development of the private sector feed industry is not convincingly argued</p>
	<p>Lack of detail on research priorities and science outputs</p>

Review by nominee from Donor Agency

LIVESTOCK CRP: Flagship 3, Feeds and forages

One representative from one donor agency reviewed the proposal and his/her scores (on a scale of 0-5) and comments are summarized below.

1. Ratings

Summary of scores for FP Qs 1-4, by Reviewer, as Scores 0-5 and as weighted average % score

Criteria	Reviewer 1
Q1 Potential for impact	5
Q2 Strategic importance, logistical viability and governance	5
Q3 Comparative advantage and cost effectiveness/value for money	5
Q4 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	5
Weighted average% FP3 Q1-4	100%

2. Summary

FP3 receives the maximum rating (5) across all FP-level criteria. Its impact pathway is clear, it has had positive past experiences: they have shown that small producers benefit, and that partnerships with the private sector are possible, although careful selection of partners is needed. In respect of its strengths, the review notes that highly qualified institutions are engaged in FP3, and social-economic-environmental trade-offs have been clearly identified as a topic. It has a clear, existing comparative advantage, with the research well aligned and the potential to deliver greater gain. Gender considerations are fully addressed. While the scale of budget is extremely difficult to judge, its overall alignment with the CGIAR is satisfactory.

20 September 2017

ISPC Assessment of Flagship 5 (Livestock, livelihoods and agri-food Systems) of the CGIAR Research Program on Livestock Agri-Food Systems (2017-2022)

1. Summary

The objective of this FP is to ensure that the technologies and strategies developed by this CRP translate into positive impacts on the welfare of the resource poor, in particular women. In its September 2016 assessment, ISPC rated this FP as weak. While the potential for strategic relevance was seen as strong, the FP did not make a clear case for its research prioritization, its focus on smallholder producers, or the potential of outcomes and impacts from pilots to go to scale.

The ISPC rating of this FP’s resubmission is strong. Prioritization is informed by a conceptual understanding of factors that drive livelihoods and well-being impacts, as well as a recognition of the integrative role that this FP plays within the CRP and for other CRPs. The FP team has provided more detail, with updated citations, about what they will do (e.g. section 2.5.1.4 and 2.5.1.6) and there are numerous references to other CRPs and to the other FPs in this CRP. There is also a critique of earlier work (section 2.5.1.5) which indicates a much more thoughtful approach and gives much more confidence that the FP team will be able to tackle the complexity in a way more likely to lead to success. A better explanation of the role that this FP plays in synthesising lessons and identifying gaps across the CRP, using W1/2, makes a strong case for its contribution to IPGs.

In terms of strategic relevance and theory of change, the FP team has reduced the focus on small-holders, recognizing that in some contexts it will make sense to engage with medium scale enterprises. The revised ToC explains more clearly how the CoAs in the FP relate to each other, in particular how lessons from CoAs 2-4 feed into priority setting (CoA1). FP outcome targets have been revised down, in line with ISPC commentary on the CRP as a whole. While the links between this FP and others have been better specified, how FPs work together to deliver and account for outcomes is not clear.

The science quality of the proposal was enhanced through a better articulation of the nature of complex systems and the challenges to achieving sustainable impact in such contexts. The overall argument for comparative advantage is strengthened. CoA3 (nutrition) highlights collaboration with A4NH, however the core capacity in the FP itself is limited. Strategic research partnerships are notably absent for CoA4 and could be a way for the CoA to strengthen capacity in key areas of such as value chains, markets and impact assessment. Cross cutting issues of gender, youth, capacity development, and climate change are well covered.

2. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments on the FP

Previous ISPC comments (14 Sep 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed	ISPC assessment
1. Unclear basis for prioritization of scientific research questions.	<p>“In the Rationale section 2.5.1.1 we have clarified how the interactive factors that drive livelihoods and well-being impacts (including nutrition and equity) lead to the key sets of research priorities which in turn define the 4 clusters of activities...</p> <p>We have also clarified how this flagship will work with the other</p>	<p>The revised FP demonstrates clear recognition of complex systems, scales and institutions involved, and what it would take for transformation to take hold from policy level down to the farm.</p> <p>Section 2.5.1.1 is much stronger. It provides more of a critique of what has worked and what still requires more work which provides more of a basis of evidence for the choice of research</p>

	flagships: by providing an integrative mechanism for technologies and strategies to be piloted and implemented among target livestock keepers and communities.”	questions. Details of what will be done in each Cluster is also much more focused and the proposed links with other Livestock FPs are clearer.
2. Generalizability of smallholder success story is questionable	“In a number of places in the text, we have changed the language to better reflect that fact that in many contexts, we also work with medium scale enterprises.”	The critique of earlier research by Livestock and Fish and the inclusion of references to medium scale livestock producers give more confidence that the research will contribute to the proposed outcomes. There are, however, still some weaknesses in the appreciation of how markets work, government regulations, and consumer demand (via prices). This is an area that still needs strengthening if an appropriate research agenda is to develop that seeks to impact entire agri-food systems.
3. Significant risk that research will deliver only localized outcomes and impacts.	The majority of the response describing what had changed was a defence of the original but with this specific mention: “We have made this” (how W1/2 funding will be used) “more clear in a number of places in the text, such as 2.5.1.1 under Lessons Learned, 2.5.1.3 on ToC, and 2.5.1.12.”	The revision clarified how the FP contributes to IPGs through synthesis and identification of lessons learned across CRP. The recognition of the imperfections of existing tools and a focus on strengthening these gives much more confidence that the team understands the complexity and has plans on how to address it.

3. Characterization of the Flagship

Main strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is now a critical assessment of the limitations of existing tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clarity how the FP will access sufficient expertise in a wide range of disciplines such as markets, policies, economics, and nutrition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender issues are well covered in a substantive way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much mention of the private sector but a lack of detail both in what it funds and also of how the FP plans to partner with it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of the complex pathways between livestock owners and nutrition 	

Review by nominee from Donor Agency

LIVESTOCK CRP: Flagship 5, Livestock, livelihoods and agri-food systems

One representative from one donor agency reviewed the proposal and his/her scores (on a scale of 0-5) and comments are summarized below.

1. Ratings

Summary of scores for FP Qs 1-4, by Reviewer, as Scores 0-5 and as weighted average % score

Criteria	Reviewer 1
Q1 Potential for impact	5
Q2 Strategic importance, logistical viability and governance	5
Q3 Comparative advantage and cost effectiveness/value for money	5
Q4 Monitoring, evaluation and learning	4
Weighted average% FP5 Q1-4	96%

2. Summary

FP5 receives high ratings: it received a maximum score of 5 for three of the four criteria, and a 4 for the fourth criterion. Credible and comprehensive description of status-quo based on Phase 1. FP5 impact pathway is clear. Comparative advantage of ILRI and partners (CIAT, ICARDA, ICRAF) is beyond question, and there is substantial alignment with CGIAR core assets and capacities. Organizational buy-in from scale-up or implementing partners is reflected. Gender considerations are well reflected. To be successful in this FP, it is most important to know how beneficiaries perceive research results; foresight tools will need to be used for continuous adjustment of research in other Livestock FPs (1-3). Potential unintended consequences of the research have not been identified, and it is not very clear whether actions of the Flagship can really be attributed to the proposed result in a super complex setting and whether the delivery system will produce the proposed results.

ISPC Assessment of Flagship 5 (Enhancing Sustainability across Agricultural Systems) of the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (2017-2022)

1. Summary

WLE FP5 aims to contribute to the evolution of more sustainable and equitable agricultural landscapes at scale without compromising on productivity imperatives. In its September 2016 assessment, the ISPC rated the WLE FP 5 as “weak”. Although the ISPC recognized the ambition of the FP to become an important interface across the CGIAR for links with global partners and initiatives as a key task, it also highlighted three important caveats: i) a lack of focus and specificity, raising questions about the feasibility of delivering results; ii) an over-reliance on partners with a mixed track record on implementation and delivery; and, iii) a limited track record and experience in influencing policy in support of the promotion of sustainable intensification at scale.

The ISPC’s rating of this FP’s resubmission is moderate. The revised FP aims to address the aforementioned concerns through a rationalization of its ambitions and impact pathways, and through a clearer identification of the skill sets required across teams. The narrative has been substantially revised and many of the high-level generalities that lacked specificity of purpose and outcome have been replaced by two clearly described clusters of activity (CoAs), whose structure and sequencing provides a logical delivery framework and involves a mix of appropriate institutions and individuals to form functional teams for their implementation.

The FP is based on the concept of co-creation of knowledge and capacity development. It also provides clarity about impact pathways in complex environments where well-intended actions and policies can have unforeseen consequences at different levels of integration. In this environment, the emphasis on capacity development in decision-focused research is appropriate. The expanded focus on unintended consequences highlights the importance of the work and legitimizes the research-policy interface addressed. The use of quantitative modelling in the advancement of the FP’s science is, however, not fully clarified. There is a potential tension however, between the desire to create toolkits and analytic frameworks with wide applicability and the need to work in local contexts where institutional and technical issues may differ widely that is not fully addressed in the proposal.

2. Assessment of CRP response to the ISPC major comments on the FP

Previous ISPC comments (14 Sep 2016)	CRP response/changes proposed	ISPC assessment
<p>1. A lack of focus and specificity raises questions about the feasibility of delivering results.</p>	<p>The revised approach now centers on integrating the collective knowledge of CRPs to provide deeper insights on how to deliver more sustainable agricultural landscapes using decision analysis techniques, some of which were tested in Phase 1. These techniques are stated to provide insights into outcomes of suites of policy/program interventions, by using various probabilistic techniques that are attuned to complex (cross-scale and data scarce)</p>	<p>CoA 5.1 provides the technical and modelling tool kit for decision support and serves as a logical starting point for the FP. Partners such as ICRAF, IWMI, IFPRI and Bioversity appear to be appropriately engaged and integrated via a working group. Some of these working group members will also participate in CoA 5.2 thereby ensuring the right level of continuity, and also providing space for new partners to participate in order to develop solutions and generate outcomes facilitated by the tools developed in CoA 5.1.</p> <p>Further, phasing of these CoAs by giving early priority to CoA 5.1 in 2018 and 2019 increases</p>

	<p>contexts, and can elucidate potential trade-offs and synergies, and provide risk/return and value-of-information analyses of decision options. As such, the revised FP seeks to deliver <i>ex ante</i> and foresight information into design and monitoring. ESA aims to focus on specific landscapes where AFS CRPS are already working and has introduced a phased implementation approach.</p>	<p>the feasibility of the proposed work and provides a logical structure. There are still some concerns about how hard, quantitative, model-based analyses will inform participatory co-learning and design under CoA 5.2.</p> <p>Evidence of: a) the inclusion of appropriately skilled social scientists in both CoAs; and, b) a recognition that the process of using quantitative tools can often be more important in informing discussions, rather than the actual quantification of interactions, would have strengthened the proposal.</p>
<p>2. Over-reliance on partners who have a mixed track record on implementation and delivery.</p>	<p>FP5 revision states that the focus has been reoriented towards closer engagement with the AFS CRPs and their networks and those at national or subnational level responsible for decisions within the target landscapes. The partnerships in the redesigned flagship are said to have been changed to include known external partners who can further supplement any missing CGIAR skills, i.e. those with demonstrated experience at the critical policy-science interface (the expertise and comparative advantage of each of the partners is provided).</p>	<p>This has been addressed by a) providing a much better focus (see point 1 above) and by considering a mix of appropriate institutions and individuals to form functional teams (see point 3 below).</p>
<p>3. Limited track record and experience in influencing policy in support of the promotion of sustainable intensification at scale.</p>	<p>The FP5 revision maintains that it now builds on and learns from successful experiences (e.g. IWMI Tata Program; AgWater Solutions Project) and aims to articulate how it will deliver at a landscape level, by reassessing and incorporating lessons from Phase 1. The revised FP intends to use structured participatory processes with AFS CRPs and national partners to co-develop and co-apply decision support tools in a social learning framework. The redesign has also considered how to bring in necessary process and intermediation skills. The overall management of the redesigned FP5 has been changed to the WLE PMU (that is claimed to bring its own strengths in</p>	<p>The track record of the teams has been better articulated (2.5.1.5 & 2.5.1.7), in terms of individuals' expertise as well as in terms of clearer linkages with other CGIAR members (e.g. IFPRI's role at the science- policy interface). Policy skills are now evident within the team, as is the intended leadership of the ESA FP program leader (Appendix 2.4).</p>

	science-policy dialogues), which will recruit a full-time researcher with experience of policy and practice reform processes.	
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3. Characterization of the Flagship

Main strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic relevance to the CGIAR CRP portfolio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear how research outputs will make a contribution to the necessary governance changes required to achieve pervasive impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced focus on unintended consequences and trade-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for FP priorities to be disproportionately influenced by bilateral/W3 funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective network of internal and external partners with strong local track records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FP's comparative advantage relative to other development partners in the area of work remains unclear.

NOTE: No nominee from a Donor Agency was identified for this FP.