



Agenda item 3
For input

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Crops to End Hunger Implementation Update

Purpose

At SMB12 (December 2018) the System Management Board endorsed the Implementation Plan for the 'Crops to End Hunger' Initiative for 2019-2021 promising more in-depth discussions at this (the April 2019) meeting. This note provides an update on progress with the Implementation Plan and initial matters arising, for the information and discussion of the Board.

Action Required

The Board is requested to provide guidance ahead of the Funders' Meeting on 5 April 2019 relating to implementation of the initiative and, specifically, on: (a) improvement plans and modernization protocols; (b) appropriate funding; and (c) stewardship and programmatic oversight.

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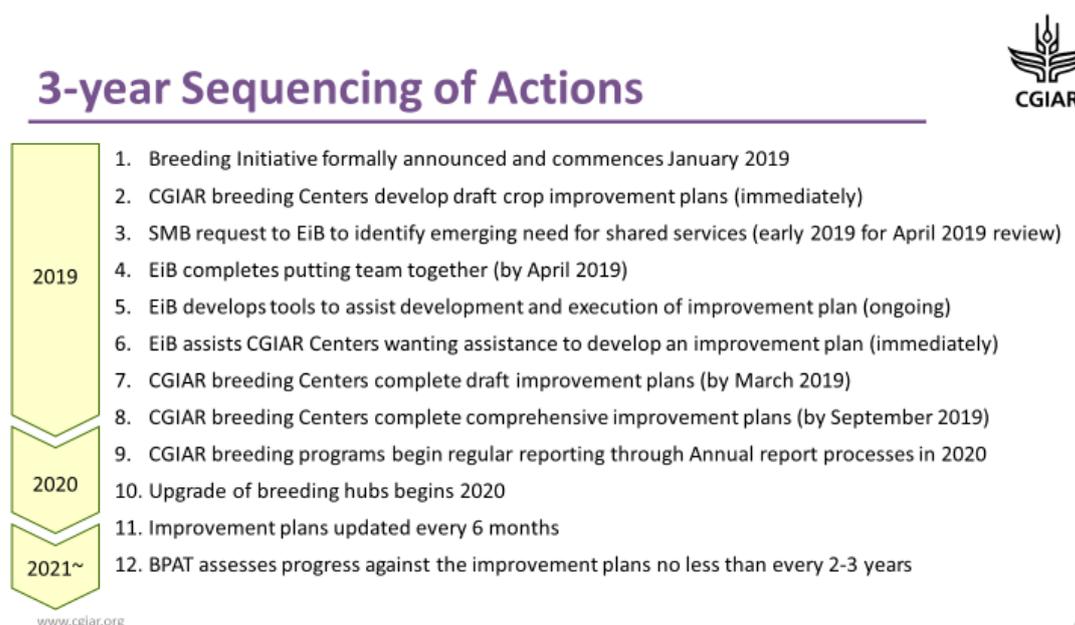
This document is a working document of the System Management Board however may be shared as part of ongoing consultations.

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Background

1. At SMB12 (December 2018), the System Management Board endorsed the Implementation Plan for the 'Crops to End Hunger' Initiative for 2019-2021 promising more in-depth discussions at this (the April 2019) meeting.
2. On 5 February 2019, the SMB Chair wrote to Directors General launching the Implementation phase of the Crops to End Hunger Initiative, encouraging support from CGIAR Senior Scientific Management for its implementation according to the timeline provided in Figure 1 (redrawn from the Implementation Plan document).
3. On 12 February, Michael Quinn, Leader of the Excellence in Breeding Platform ('EiB'), wrote to Directors of Research and Breeding Leads referring to the need for Centers to develop improvement plans for their breeding programs: all CGIAR Centers with crop improvement programs are asked to develop a draft improvement plan by 31 March and a more detailed/ refined plan by 30 September 2019 as per the schedule. A template for the improvement plan was provided. The EiB is expected to (i) be the interlocutor and source of advice for Centers for the development of final improved breeding plans by September 2019, and, (ii) identify opportunities for shared system services and savings to the SMB. The responsibility for the implementation of individual improved crop breeding plans resides with the relevant Centers.

Figure 1:



Progress with implementation: Breeding improvement Plans

4. On 12 and 13 March, the SMB Chair and the Executive Director, CGIAR System Organization hosted calls with Directors General, or their nominees, from concerned Centers to establish progress with implementation. The Centers reported encouraging progress, with several Centers working effectively with the recommendations of the Breeding Program Assessment Tool (BPAT) and with the EiB and other advice, aiming to have draft, crop-specific, breeding improvement plans ready by the end of March (e.g. CIAT for all its food crops; CIMMYT for maize and wheat; CIP for potato and sweet potato). Others are working towards the same goals according to circumstances (e.g. IRRI, which has been progressively modernizing its breeding approaches to rice, is completing a gap-filling exercise; IITA has been working with a number of different experts across its several crops so that plans, whilst advanced, may be at different levels of completion; AfricaRice is in the midst of developing new plans for its program in Africa into which the modernization of breeding is a central component; and ICARDA has only recently had a first BPAT assessment of one of its crops, durum wheat, and inevitably will need to gear development of its improvement plans for grain legumes to BPAT recommendations as and when they become available – the implementation schedule anticipates and allows for a staggered approach in this case).
5. The calls helped reinforce two additional perspectives, firstly in relation to product profiles and, secondly, in drawing attention to the goals of the modernization component and the overall expectations of the Crops to End Hunger initiative towards 2030 (described in paragraph 6, under the Funding section below). A key component of each breeding improvement plan is the inclusion and definition of the product profiles which are being targeted for development. The product profiles¹ enhance the clarity of breeding program goals as compared with the original CRP program proposals (2016). With potential additional work on impact areas and size of expected benefits from the introduction of the proposed new products, funders will be able to develop a framework of goals and costs (or investment cases) to help prioritize future funding.

Progress with funding the Crops to End Hunger Initiative

6. Modernization of CGIAR breeding programs is a goal in itself, but also an essential part of CGIAR being able to contribute most effectively to SDG-related impacts resulting from better varieties for yield, biofortification, resilience and marketability - and the nutritional status and income flows which result. It is important therefore to distinguish in the definition of the Crops to End Hunger Initiative the essential

¹ Examples of product profiles might be: white maize hybrids targeted at small holder farmers in drought-prone areas of Eastern and southern Africa; short-duration rice varieties for favorable environments in Eastern India targeted to rice wheat rotation systems; cassava for gari production in West Africa; beans for the great Lakes region of Eastern Africa etc.

modernization and upgrade of CGIAR breeding capacity and the long-term breeding programs which will continue, in the future in an enhanced fashion, to deliver outputs through 2030. The focus on breeding is to secure this essential heartland capacity for CGIAR which links to several outcome targets, notwithstanding that this approach will have to interact with aspects of discovery research, better agronomy, seed systems and delivery channels to have its effects. Funders therefore have three general means of contributing to the breeding improvement – through steady state or increased W1/W2 funding to CRPs or Platforms, and through additional W2 or W3 funding for the modernization agenda (see below). Funders may also wish to link more general system support around the Crops to End Hunger Initiative to bring forward these other aspects of research and delivery simultaneously.

7. Between December 2018 and February 2019 two of the core group of funders of the initiative were able to secure *additional funds for the modernization component of the Crops to End Hunger Initiative*. Germany was able to commit the equivalent of USD7.38 million through a W3 fund allocation to CIMMYT (as the Lead Center of the EiB) and the UK has announced the possibility of additional funding of GBP1.5 million (USD 1.94 million at current rates) in September through W2 (mechanism to be confirmed).
8. The core funders to the Initiative (to date, Australia, BMGF, Germany, UK, USAID) will convene in Montpellier (5 April 2019 – between the current SMB meeting and the following SIMEC meeting) to consider how best they can coordinate funding approaches for the modernization agenda and continuing long term support to crop breeding. One possible mechanism for W2 funding of the modernization agenda is the provision of funds through a new (modernization) funding module of the EiB. This could allow the flow of funds to Centers for steps in the modernization process which could be sequenced according to the specific crop breeding plan requirements, as well as for shared system services to the Initiative. This highlights the importance of the breeding improvement plans (including defined product profiles) in providing a framework for planning, prioritization and disbursement of funding for the uplift agenda. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of crop breeding program improvement will be required. These and additional possible mechanisms will be discussed by the funder group directly following the SMB meeting.

Responsibilities in Implementation of the initiative, short and long term.

9. The core funder group has gone a long way in establishing the overall Strategy and momentum of the initiative and hopes to see rapid and tangible results in the modernization of CGIAR crop breeding programs in the current Business cycle.
10. The SMB has initiated the implementation plan development and the EiB has received substantial funder support to develop capacity and to assume its role as a system (and system services) support and conduit of advice to individual breeding programs. The Center response to breeding improvement plans development has

been encouraging and will need to be maintained because of the importance of the plans to crystalizing the steps in the modernization agenda and channeling funding.

11. The SMB may wish to provide input to the Chair on whether there are additional means that may need to be considered for the Board to exercise adequate oversight and/or programmatic monitoring of the implementation and management of the initiative, in full cognizance of the role of EiB as co-managing the implementation with concerned Centers.