



## **COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES FROM THE CONSORTIUM BOARD FOR THE DEVELOPING OF MEGA PROGRAMME FULL PROPOSALS**

### **Agriculture for Improved Nutrition and Health**

#### **I. Overview of the proposal**

The concept note does a very good job of putting together a coherent work programme that focuses on two broad research components: maximizing the potential of agriculture to improve nutrition through better dietary quality, and promoting safe agricultural and food systems practices that reduce infectious and chronic disease risk.

The conceptual framework for linking agriculture, health and nutrition is acceptable and the proposed approach is clear in terms of objectives and activities. The Consortium Board fully endorses the reviewers' comments and recommends that they should be addressed in the development of the full proposal.

In order to fulfill the requirements for the endorsement of this Mega Programme by the CB, there is a need for further work and more clarity on specific commitments in the full proposal as outlined below.

#### **II. General guidelines**

Under this heading, four guidelines are listed for further development of MPs which are common to the other concept notes moving to full proposals.

##### **1. *Diagrammatic Impact Pathway***

The proposal would be improved by providing a flowchart/schematic of the stages leading towards impact, i.e., inputs, outputs, outcomes, partners needed to achieve the desired impacts.

##### **2. *Partnership***

The CB recognises the objective of this proposal in incorporating into the MP a number of relevant stakeholders for achieving impact on the ground with the objective of reducing poverty, improving food security, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The proposal recognized that more work has to be done in this area, in particular with those organizations related to development and extension activities, including farmer and producer organizations. Partnership with the private sector should also receive greater attention in the proposal.

In order to facilitate the effectiveness of partnership agreements, it is suggested that a clear partnership strategic plan be envisaged in the proposal. This should include a proper balance of core partners, a definition of partners' role and clear incentives to partners for engaging in the MP.



### **3. Gender**

Gender must be an essential ingredient embedded in all MPs. A number of relevant and useful suggestions have been put forward by reviewers in the appraisal of fast track MPs, and each MP will get a copy of their reviews. The CB has decided to commission a gender scoping study in order to analyze the options and strategies for integrating and mainstreaming gender research in the entire MP portfolio. This work is in progress and should be finalized by September. The CB suggests waiting for its results and recommendations before defining specific gender inputs into individual MPs.

### **4. Management**

No “one size fits all” management structure is envisaged for all MPs. Each structure should reflect the characteristics and specificities of individual MP. However, certain principles should guide its definition such as: (i) simplicity, (ii) one lead centre being accountable to the CB, (iii) management committee with balanced representation of centres sponsoring the proposal as well as the most relevant stakeholders, (iv) independent scientific advice, and (v) dispute settlement mechanism.

## **III. Specific guidelines**

In developing the full Mega Programme proposal, the following points need to be addressed:

### **1. Interaction with other MPs**

Although links with other Centres are well identified, the CB requests to make the same tasks but related to other MPs considering the new context of the CGIAR and, recommends that appropriate mechanisms for collaboration/coordination will be defined in order to maximize synergies among MPs.

### **2. Articulation with Harvest Plus Challenge Programme**

The proposal needs to clarify how the experiences and lessons of the Harvest Plus Challenge Programme will be taken into account in the development of this MP and how the integration of this Challenge Programme will be achieved included timeframes.

### **3. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

The CB suggests broadening the information of the methodology, principles and timeline to be used in the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of this MP, included some key indicators to follow up, as well as providing information on how data will be collected.

### **4. Budget**

Current budget in the MP proposals were drafted without specifications as to the financial limits of the size of the research programs. At the time of designing the CGIAR Reform, it had been hoped to double the Fund in size, but an economic crisis has intervened which has diminished donors’ flexibility. Hence, there is a substantial gap between the donor financial realities, and the funding requirements expected by MPs.

In order to address this funding gap, the CB has decided that the budget proposal of the MPs should be reformulated with (i) a priority ranking of activities, (ii) initial budget for year one based on 2009 audited figures plus 10%, and increasing this budget over the next three years to reach by the end of this period what is currently requested.



#### **IV. Recommendation**

The CB considers that this concept note “Agriculture for Improved Nutrition and Health” is a very good basis for its development into a strong full MP proposal. Further work is still needed to achieve this goal. In this respect, the recommendations of the CB and those made by the reviewers that are in accordance with the CB line of thought, as indicated in above sections of this document, should be taken into account.