

March 14, 2018

Dear Marco,

I am pleased to submit the proposal ‘**Strategic and applied research to meet the demand of beans in Africa and Latin America - A Common Bean flagship**’. I do this submission on behalf of CIAT and multiple partners in Latin America and Africa including members of the Pan African Bean Research Alliance (PABRA). A key addition to the CGIAR Research portfolio, this proposal will leverage bean-based technologies that exploit the genetic diversity of *Phaseolus* genus for dynamic markets and consumers, contribute to food and nutrition security, health, and the alleviation of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

About 400 million people in the tropics eat beans as part of their daily diet. Often referred to as “the meat of the poor,” beans provide a highly nutritious food, containing protein, fiber, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and micronutrients. Beans also provide income for millions of people, particularly in Africa and Latin America. Continuous investment in research for development of common bean is essential to meet market demand, income generation and dietary needs. As known, CIAT safeguards the world’s largest and most diverse collection of bean germplasm. The collection consists of around 36,000 samples of cultivated materials and is a valuable resource worldwide.

In the first phase of the CGIAR Research Programs, beans were part of the Grain Legumes CRP and produced significant outputs and outcomes. For example, the external review of the Grain Legumes CRP noted that, “Linkage of participatory research to innovation platforms is creating positive impact (for example through the Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance-PABRA). Such systems approaches are to be recommended across all seed enterprises”. It allowed PABRA to reach 16 million households with improved bean varieties, bean products, and crop management practices in the last 5 years.

Despite those evidences of success, it was suggested to reconsider the inclusion of the common bean as a crop in the second phase proposal when grain legumes had been combined with dryland cereals in the GLDC CRP (reference: Findings and Recommendations of the GLDC Expert Panel, March 2017). As a result, common bean was left out from the proposal for the GLDC CRP.

Among stakeholders, there is a recognition that leaving out bean from the CGIAR portfolio will impede achievement of CGIAR System Level Outcomes. The System Management Board (after their December, 2017 meeting) requested that (i) CIAT develop a proposal for a common bean

flagship research program; and that (ii) the System Management Office lead consultation and engagement among Centers, relevant programs and the ISPC, to develop a proposal for the optimum location of that work. The Board confirmed that the shared intention was for the Board to be able to recommend the relevant proposal to the System Council's 6th meeting in May 2018 for inclusion in the Portfolio. Through discussions between the System Management Office, and GLDC and CIAT leadership, it was determined that the flagship would most appropriately be hosted by GLDC; contributing to common overall outcomes shared by the CRP flagships while maintaining an independent flagship status. We see significant potential in this agreement for the scientific interchange with other flagships of the GLDC, the details of which will be worked out in the future, pending further decisions and recommendations from the System Management Board and the System Council.

I thank the commitment of the System Management Board and the CGIAR System Council for considering this proposal.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruben Echeverria'.

Ruben Echeverria
Director General

